

# CHANGES AHEAD



*Future*

*Directions*

*for the*

*U.S.*

*Overseas*

*Military*

*Presence*

Richard L. Kugler

P R O J E C T   A I R   F O R C E

RAND

The research reported here was sponsored by the United States Air Force under Contract F49642-96-C-0001. Further information may be obtained from the Strategic Planning Division, Directorate of Plans, H1 USAF.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Kugler, Richard L.  
Changes ahead : future directions for the U.S. overseas /  
Richard L. Kugler.  
p. cm.  
"Prepared for the U.S. Air Force by RAND's Project AIR  
FORCE."  
"MR-956-AF"  
Includes bibliographical references.  
ISBN 0-8330-2619-4  
1. United States—Armed Forces—Foreign countries.  
2. United States—Military relations—Foreign countries.  
3. Military planning—United States. 4. National security—  
United States. 5. United States—Military policy.  
I. Project AIR FORCE (U.S.).  
II. Title.  
UA23.K7893 1998  
358.4 '1357—dc21

98-18228  
CIP

RAND is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of its research sponsors.

© Copyright 1998 RAND

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from RAND.

Published 1998 by RAND

1700 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138

1333 H St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005-4707

RAND URL: <http://www.rand.org/>

To order RAND documents or to obtain additional information, contact Distribution Services: Telephone: (310) 451-7002;

Fax: (310) 451-6915; Internet: [order@rand.org](mailto:order@rand.org)

# CHANGES AHEAD

*Future Directions  
for the U.S. Overseas  
Military Presence*

19981125 029

**Richard L. Kugler**

MR-956-AF

Prepared for the United States Air Force

P R O J E C T   A I R   F O R C E

**RAND**

Approved for public release;  
distribution unlimited

---

## PREFACE

---

U.S. military forces stationed and deployed abroad perform unique and important functions in support of U.S. national interests. Their presence overseas visibly underscores the U.S. commitment and capability to defend its interests and its allies, thus contributing to deterrence and stability. U.S. forces abroad help to create integrated U.S. and allied military capabilities through joint and combined training exercises and by developing invaluable personal contacts with foreign counterparts. Also, U.S. forces routinely stationed and deployed overseas provide policymakers with capabilities needed to respond quickly to sudden crises or threats of aggression.

For these reasons, maintaining capable joint forces in regions where important U.S. interests are at stake will remain a central feature of the U.S. force posture as long as this nation pursues a strategy characterized by high levels of engagement in global affairs. Since the end of the Cold War, the posture of U.S. forces stationed and deployed abroad has changed substantially. Other than in the Persian Gulf region, those changes have been characterized mainly by reductions in the number of personnel and units from their Cold War levels. For the most part, stationed forces remain based where they have long been based, despite the fact that the focus of our concerns in key regions is shifting.

This report provides a comprehensive review of the U.S. overseas presence from a "top-down" perspective. It emphasizes the need to strike an appropriate balance between continuity and change. Accordingly, it suggests that, as the future unfolds, substantial realignment may be needed in both the mix of U.S. forces stationed abroad and their locations and activities. The purpose is not to



diminish U.S. capabilities, but instead to make them more capable of handling the missions and requirements ahead.

This report surveys the changing international situation in light of U.S. national security objectives. From this assessment, the author derives a set of future U.S. military missions in key regions. He then posits a range of alternative future force postures for U.S. overseas presence and evaluates these according to a broad set of criteria. In the process, the author is mindful of incipient changes in the capabilities of U.S. forces, brought about by the fielding of new systems and the development of new operational concepts. A key conclusion offered here is that U.S. defense planners should begin to regard U.S. forces stationed abroad less as the leading edge of a large-scale reinforcement (though they will continue to serve this function), and more as the basis for projecting influence within the regions where they are based. Such a concept seems well-suited to a world in which the foci of U.S. and allied interests and concerns are widening inexorably outward beyond the old Cold War periphery.

This work was undertaken by the Strategy and Doctrine Program of RAND's Project AIR FORCE. It was sponsored by the Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff, National Defense Review and Headquarters, U.S. Air Force. This report should be of interest to students and practitioners of U.S. defense planning, particularly those concerned with the changing security dynamics of Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf, and with the potential of air forces to assume new roles in U.S. joint operations.

## **PROJECT AIR FORCE**

Project AIR FORCE, a division of RAND, is the Air Force's federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) for studies and analyses. It provides the Air Force with independent analyses of policy alternatives affecting the development, employment, combat readiness, and support of current and future aerospace forces. Research is primarily performed in three programs: Strategy and Doctrine, Force Modernization and Employment, and Resource Management and System Acquisition.

---

## CONTENTS

---

Preface . . . . .	iii
Figures . . . . .	ix
Tables . . . . .	xi
Summary . . . . .	xiii
Acknowledgments . . . . .	xxiii
Abbreviations . . . . .	xxv
Chapter One	
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Contemplating the Future . . . . .	2
Organization . . . . .	5
Chapter Two	
CURRENT U.S. OVERSEAS PRESENCE . . . . .	7
The Current Overseas Presence: Resources and	
Assets . . . . .	8
Overseas Presence as Part of U.S. Defense	
Strategy . . . . .	10
Reasons for Overseas Presence . . . . .	12
Composition of Overseas Presence . . . . .	12
Evaluating the Current Overseas Presence: . . . . .	15
Strategic Considerations . . . . .	15
Theater-by-Theater Appraisal . . . . .	18
Military Considerations . . . . .	22
Major Theater War Defense in the Persian Gulf and	
Korea . . . . .	26

Summary . . . . .	34
Chapter Three	
THE IMPACT OF FUTURE INTERNATIONAL CONDITIONS ON THE U.S. OVERSEAS PRESENCE . . . . .	37
Toward a Future of Dynamic Change and Uncertainty . . . . .	37
The Contributions of Complexity Theory to Understanding International Change . . . . .	39
Preventing Descents to Permit Progress . . . . .	46
Summary . . . . .	56
Chapter Four	
NEW PURPOSES AND GEOGRAPHY FOR U.S. OVERSEAS PRESENCE . . . . .	59
Toward a New Strategic Planning Framework . . . . .	61
New Strategic Objectives . . . . .	66
New Strategy Precepts . . . . .	68
New Military Missions . . . . .	72
Toward a New Design Concept . . . . .	75
Future Strategic Directions in Each Region . . . . .	78
Europe . . . . .	78
Persian Gulf . . . . .	81
Asia . . . . .	82
The Role of Allies and Coalition Partners in Power Projection . . . . .	84
Summary . . . . .	93
Chapter Five	
TOWARD DIFFERENT AND BETTER FORCES . . . . .	95
The Importance of "Being There" with Combat Forces . . . . .	96
Future Force-Sizing Principles . . . . .	101
Possible Portfolio Posture and a Changing Mix . . . . .	109
Toward Higher-Quality, Reengineered Forces . . . . .	119
Impact of RMA . . . . .	120
Implications for Overseas Presence . . . . .	123
Military Infrastructure for Outlying Areas . . . . .	126
Importance of New Reception Facilities and Bases . . . . .	127
An Innovative Idea: New USAF Deployment Bases . . . . .	132
Summary . . . . .	136

Chapter Six

OPTIONS FOR FUTURE U.S. OVERSEAS PRESENCE . . . .	139
A Spectrum of Options . . . . .	139
Option 1: Continuity Posture . . . . .	142
Option 2: Evolutionary Posture . . . . .	146
Option 3: Reengineered Posture . . . . .	149
Option 4: Rotational Posture . . . . .	154
Option 5: Gulf-Heavy Posture . . . . .	158
Option 6: Asia-Heavy Posture . . . . .	159
Option 7: Global Threat Posture . . . . .	161
Option 8: Stable World Posture . . . . .	163
Implications for the Department of Defense . . . . .	164
Implications for the Air Force . . . . .	167
Summary . . . . .	168

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSIONS. . . . .	171
----------------------	-----

References . . . . .	173
----------------------	-----

---

## FIGURES

---

2.1 U.S. Defense Strategy and Power Projection . . . . .	10
2.2 Current U.S. Overseas Presence . . . . .	13
2.3 Current Multitheater Strategic Situation . . . . .	22
2.4 MTW Capability as a Function of Military Conditions . . . . .	27
2.5 Force Availability for Two MTWs . . . . .	27
2.6 MTW Force Balance in Korea and Persian Gulf . . . . .	29
2.7 Contingency Outcomes in the Persian Gulf . . . . .	33
3.1 Insights from Complexity Theory . . . . .	41
3.2 Alternative International Outcomes . . . . .	45
3.3 How Does Instability Occur? . . . . .	54
4.1 Influencing the Future International System . . . . .	62
4.2 Components of a New Strategic Planning Framework for U.S. Overseas Presence . . . . .	63
4.3 Impact of Enlarging U.S. Security Perimeter . . . . .	65
4.4 Components of Broader Strategic Purposes . . . . .	67
4.5 A New Power-Projection Concept for U.S. Overseas Presence . . . . .	76
4.6 Dominant Strategic Objectives in Key Theaters . . . . .	79
4.7 Future U.S./NATO Strategic Agenda . . . . .	79
4.8 Future U.S. Strategic Agenda in the Persian Gulf . . . . .	81
4.9 Future U.S. Strategic Agenda in Asia . . . . .	83
5.1 A Sample Air Base Network in Europe . . . . .	134
5.2 A Sample Air base Network in Asia . . . . .	135

---

## TABLES

---

2.1	Reasons for Overseas Presence . . . . .	13
2.2	The Land and Air Balances in Korea and the Persian Gulf . . . . .	30
3.1	Potential Political, Economic, and Military Dangers Ahead . . . . .	50
4.1	Components of a New Design Concept for U.S. Overseas Presence . . . . .	77
5.1	Manpower Requirements for Combat Units . . . . .	106
5.2	Alternative Regional Postures . . . . .	107
6.1	Option 5: Gulf-Heavy Posture . . . . .	159
6.2	Option 6: Asia-Heavy Posture . . . . .	160
6.3	Option 7: Global Threat Posture . . . . .	162
6.4	Option 8: Stable World Posture . . . . .	163
6.5	Evaluating the Key Options . . . . .	165

---

## SUMMARY

---

Now that a new and different era of international politics is dawning, where is the U.S. overseas military presence headed, and how can it be steered in sound directions? These important questions are addressed here. The U.S. overseas presence is headed toward an era of change in its core features. Tomorrow's overseas presence likely will be pursuing new objectives and missions in new places, and it may need different forces and activities to do so. Consequently, status-quo thinking no longer applies to this important aspect of U.S. defense policy. The challenge facing the U.S. government will be to guide the coming changes in ways that produce a new and better overseas presence, one that can deal effectively with future international affairs.

### CHANGING PURPOSES

Because the world remains a turbulent and dangerous place full of surprises, the United States will continue to need to deploy large forces abroad for the foreseeable future. Any wholesale withdrawal of U.S. forces could be destabilizing and could inflict major damage on common western security interests. But the need for a strong U.S. overseas presence does not mean that tomorrow's posture should be identical to today's, or even closely resemble it. To the contrary, the future overseas presence may need to be very different from today's presence in many ways. This conclusion rises to the fore when stock is taken of the manifold changes already starting to take place, or seemingly destined to occur, in the rationale for stationing U.S. forces abroad.

Today, the United States deploys about 235,000 troops overseas from all three services. The total includes about 109,000 troops in Europe; 93,000 in Asia; and 23,000 in the Persian Gulf. This global posture is functioning effectively in today's technological and strategic setting, but tomorrow is another matter. The United States needs a posture that will respond equally well to the situation a decade or so from now. The need to meet shifting requirements in a fluid setting is the core reason an era of change lies ahead for U.S. forces stationed abroad. In essence, change should be welcomed, not feared, because it will be a primary vehicle for continuing to ensure that the U.S. overseas presence remains an effective instrument of national policy.

One source of change is the ongoing Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), which is sweeping over the entire U.S. force posture. The RMA is slated to introduce new information systems, technology, and structures by 2010 or thereabouts. It will produce new forces that are more sophisticated than today's versions and that operate differently, have different doctrines, require different logistic support, and have somewhat less manpower than now. This transformation alone will have a major effect on the U.S. overseas presence, irrespective of other developments. It will not only alter the character of U.S. forces but also trigger changes in alliance defense affairs and in the nature of war itself. As U.S. overseas forces undergo the RMA, they will preserve or increase their superiority over enemy forces in combat. But this achievement alone will not guarantee success at overseas presence missions, many of which will be political in nature. In the future, high technology will be a necessary feature of an effective U.S. overseas presence but not a sufficient feature.

Another source of change is the need to respond to new strategic conditions abroad. Today's U.S. overseas presence is a product of history and threat-based planning. Originally tailored to deter Cold War threats, it was designed to be mostly reactive and stationary in its outlook. That is, it was intended to provide unmoving bastions of forward defense in all three theaters and to receive U.S. reinforcements if enemy forces committed aggression. When the Cold War ended, the threat to Europe faded, and U.S. forces there began preparing for new missions as NATO itself started adapting to new conditions. In Asia and the Persian Gulf, however, regional threats remained. As a result, U.S. forces there continued to focus on being



ready for wartime defense missions. In the coming years, the risk of a new Korean war may diminish, thereby necessitating a shift away from threat-based plans in Asia as well. In the Persian Gulf and the greater Middle East, threats may be growing, not diminishing, but other changes are at work in regional affairs that could shift U.S. defense strategy there away from focusing only on threats.

U.S. national security strategy has already begun reacting to this changing strategic landscape, having recently moved beyond its earlier focus on preparing for two major theater wars (MTWs), in Korea and the Persian Gulf. The new U.S. strategy is one of engagement and is animated by the three concepts of "shaping" the international strategic environment, "responding" to a wide spectrum of potential contingencies, and "preparing now" for an uncertain future. The coming challenge will be one of designing a new U.S. overseas presence tailored to carrying out these three concepts. In areas where threats still predominate, U.S. overseas forces necessarily will remain focused on wartime defense missions. But in other areas, the forces likely will focus mostly on engagement by performing the shaping mission. That is, they will be preoccupied with promoting alliances and partnerships, preventing instability and competition, and deterring menacing conduct in general.

This new U.S. national security strategy likely will be guided by policies that are tailored to the unique demands of the three key theaters. U.S. strategy likely will focus on simultaneously consolidating peace in Europe, stabilizing Asia's fluid security affairs in an era of rapid change, and dealing with growing dangers in the greater Middle East, including the threat of weapons of mass destruction. These differing strategic agendas will set the stage for determining how U.S. forces are to carry out their shaping, responding, and preparing missions in all three theaters. The fast-paced political and economic changes now under way in all places, coupled with equally rapid military changes, practically guarantee that the specific goals and missions of U.S. forces several years from now will be different from those of today.

Another important change is that, as U.S. overseas forces increasingly shift toward carrying out the new strategy and its three concepts, they also will be operating across a larger geographic setting than now. This trend toward a wider operating perimeter has already started in Europe. There, U.S. forces no longer operate only

in Western Europe. Today, they are also pursuing partnership relations with former adversaries to the east and carrying out peace support missions in the Balkans. In the coming years, they will be charged with fulfilling security commitments to new NATO members in Central and Eastern Europe. As more members join NATO and other western security institutions, U.S. forces will acquire a host of new missions in new regions in peace, crisis, and war.

Something similar seems in store for other regions. In Asia, U.S. forces today remain focused on defending South Korea and Japan. In the coming years, they will continue performing residual defense missions in Northeast Asia, but—especially if Korea unifies while China becomes stronger—they also will likely be called upon to carry out new missions elsewhere. The forces' shaping activities likely will expand along the great "Asian crescent," stretching from Japan through Southeast Asia, and even into South Asia. The recent signing of an agreement to use Singapore's ports for servicing U.S. naval vessels is one indicator of a trend that likely will grow. In the greater Middle East, a similar trend is under way. Ten years ago, U.S. forces focused on defending the sea lanes to Persian Gulf oil fields. Today, the forces not only protect Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, they also fly patrol missions over Iraq, enforcing United Nations sanctions there. If rogue countries acquire weapons of mass destruction, the effect could be to broaden the geographic scope of U.S. operations even further across this big, dangerous region—not only to deter aggression but also to reassure vulnerable countries and develop partnerships with them.

In all three theaters—Europe, Asia, and the greater Middle East—the U.S. overseas presence thus seems destined to shift from stationary local missions to becoming an important instrument of regional power projection. Its current main bases may shift from receiving reinforcements to serving as hubs for projecting operations outward, into new zones where U.S. forces have not traditionally been present. In these zones, U.S. forces will not be mostly preparing for war. Instead, they will be carrying out the vital new mission of shaping the international strategic terrain by promoting, preventing, and deterring.

These new operations, moreover, will not normally be unilateral. U.S. forces often will be engaged in multilateral activities with many countries, including old allies and new partners. This too will be an

important change. In the past, the western alliance mostly focused on defending old, Cold War zones against imposing enemy threats. In parallel with how U.S. forces are changing, multilateral activities will now need to be expanded to include shaping, responding, and preparing actions in a much wider geographic setting for all three theaters. One of the biggest challenges confronting the western democracies is whether they can reform their alliances and partnerships in the necessary ways. Today, most traditional allies lack the capacity to project military forces beyond their borders and to perform RMA operations. Whether the allies will make the necessary reforms is to be seen. The key point is that the U.S. overseas presence will need to be prepared in ways that encourage these reforms and that can take advantage of them when they occur.

## THINKING ABOUT NEW AND BETTER FORCES

The prospect of designing a new U.S. overseas military presence is unsettling, not only because of the difficulties posed for the Department of Defense (DoD) but also because it can worry allies and friends, many of whom look to the United States for constancy and fear that change may spell withdrawal. Yet the United States cannot adequately reassure foreign countries with an outdated force posture that remains optimized for old, irrelevant missions but cannot perform new missions. The task ahead is one of forging a new posture that can perform new, highly important missions in ways that safeguard both U.S. interests and the security of allies and friends.

How can this task best be accomplished? How can the United States think in innovative ways that produce wise decisions about not only the forces stationed abroad but also their activities and funding levels? The answer is that this thinking should be performed from the top down, in the way that sound strategic planning is properly accomplished. That is, planning should not use arbitrary manpower levels as the basis for determining force deployments. Neither should it view change in linear terms, as though a sound future posture can be designed by altering current force deployments upward or downward in a mechanistic, arithmetical way. Instead, it should begin by assessing strategic objectives, missions, and requirements. Only after these foundations are established should planning address the resulting implications for manpower, units, activities, and money. To the extent possible, planning also should establish a

coherent sense of goals and a path to attain them in an orderly fashion, rather than muddle along in incremental ways that lack direction or can be blown off course by the shifting political winds.

Future requirements for the U.S. overseas presence likely will remain large, even though there might appear to be fewer threats in the future than now. One reason is that the world will still be a dangerous place: It will be capable of producing new threats quickly, even if none exist at a particular moment. An equally important reason is that environment-shaping generates sizable requirements of its own. Especially when this effort is conducted in three major regions, working with many allies and partners, ensuring stable security conditions, and dissuading troublemakers cannot be accomplished with small forces. The likelihood that requirements will remain high, however, does not mean that they will be unchanging or that the current posture, with its specific features, will remain appropriate over the coming decade.

Having a clear understanding of new purposes will help establish new principles for designing the future U.S. overseas presence. In each region, the rationale for today's overseas presence originated the need to carry out a dominating defense plan for a single, major wartime contingency. In some places, new missions have been added, but they have been added onto an integrated wartime posture, rather than producing a different posture tailored for them. In many regions, tomorrow's overseas presence likely will need to serve not only a broader set of crisis contingencies but also a wide range of peacetime political goals. It also will need to be flexible so that it can adapt smoothly to new conditions. As a consequence, the United States may be best advised to focus on creating a "portfolio posture" in these regions. This term means a modular posture composed of multiple diverse assets that can perform many separate operations, rather than a posture designed solely for a single warfighting mission, so that it lacks the flexibility to perform other peacetime and crisis missions. Such a posture may not be principally concerned with being prepared for a big war at a moment's notice, but it will have plenty of business to keep it occupied. If the recent past is prologue, its operating tempo may be higher than today's.

In the future, the United States may require a different number and distribution of forces in each region than today. For example, fewer troops might be stationed in Europe and Asia if these regions

become more stable, but more troops could be needed in the greater Middle East and Persian Gulf if threats there worsen. In Europe and Asia, the troops that remain may often be based in different locations than today's. In all theaters a joint posture will be needed, composed of land, air, and sea components. But a different tri-service mix may be required. For example, the fading of traditional threats may allow thinning U.S. ground forces in some places, but the growing need for speedy distant deployments could call for stationing equal or greater numbers of air and naval forces. In places where U.S. ground forces are still needed, the requirement may not be for heavy ground formations but instead for a wide array of units, e.g., armor, air-mobile infantry, attack helicopters, and deep-fire systems.

The future likely will also require a broader, more widespread network of command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) assets; bases; reception facilities; and prepositioned equipment in zones where U.S. forces do not operate today but operate tomorrow. New bases and facilities, for example, will be needed in Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean region, Southeast Asia, and perhaps elsewhere. An innovative idea is to establish an interlocking network of allied-owned air bases, to which U.S. air forces could deploy quickly in an emergency. This could allow the United States to move powerful air forces quickly across the full breadth of all three major regions, thereby permitting fast crisis response, often before other forces can arrive at the scene. Steps to improve the rapid deployment of ground and naval forces, of course, could also assist in developing better power-projection capabilities for the U.S. overseas presence.

Along with these steps, new programs will be needed for security assistance and other forms of foreign military interactions (FMI), e.g., exercises, training programs, and visitations. Such programs are an essential feature of the U.S. overseas presence, for they play a major role in engaging new partners and working with them to shape regional security affairs. This need for new programs will appear in Europe, the greater Middle East, and Asia. The challenge will be one of joining together U.S. forces, their operations, and security assistance-FMI programs to form a coherent overseas-presence team of assets and activities in each region.

Even if it requires less manpower than today, the future U.S. overseas presence will not come cheap. Indeed, the cost of new C4ISR assets,

a high operating tempo, new bases and facilities, and larger security assistance–FMI programs could raise the cost of stationing U.S. forces abroad. If so, the DoD will face the task of reconciling this upward trend with the rising cost of modernizing its forces as the RMA gets under way. Clearly, priorities will have to be set, but the more basic point is that the U.S. overseas presence should be seen as a separate defense program, one that must have careful management so that its requirements are adequately met and its scarce resources are used wisely.

## A SPECTRUM OF OPTIONS

In summary, the future U.S. overseas presence is likely to be different from now in several important respects. It will pursue new objectives and missions in ways that place less emphasis on threats and more on shaping. Rather than a permanent creation, it will need to be flexible and adaptive, constantly changing as the global situation evolves. It likely will become oriented toward power projection rather than only toward local defense. It will be tailored to support the separate dimensions of emerging U.S. strategy in Europe, Asia, and the greater Middle East and the Persian Gulf. It likely will operate over a wider geographic setting, both unilaterally and multilaterally. It may have less manpower than now, but could cost more. It may be distributed among the key regions differently, with fewer forces in some regions but more in others. It may be designed to provide a flexible “portfolio” of assets and activities rather than a tightly integrated posture for a single dominating mission. It may have a different mix of joint combat and support forces, and it will have RMA weapons and doctrines. To one degree or another, it will be equipped with new power-projection assets in such areas as C4ISR, bases, infrastructure, and prepositioning. If obtained, all of these features will add up to an agenda of major change.

Changes of this sort cannot be made overnight; neither should they be carried out hastily. A steady, step-by-step approach that accelerates as future requirements become clearer will be best. A guiding vision is needed, but at this stage, no single option can serve as a fixed blueprint. Accordingly, this study provides eight different options that can be used to help guide thinking and planning. These options reflect alternative approaches to change, different strategic designs, and a wide array of plausible international conditions:

1. *A Continuity Posture.* This is the base case. Because it postulates that U.S. policy and today's global conditions will not change much, this option envisions that the U.S. overseas presence will reflect the status quo and will change only marginally and in ways already planned. It keeps troop strength at the current level of 225,000 in the three key theaters. It seeks no unplanned changes in allied forces for power projection.
2. *An Evolutionary Posture.* This option moves beyond the status quo, changing the U.S. overseas presence in moderate ways, mostly through the RMA and by developing new bases and infrastructure faster than now planned. It keeps troop strength at the current level, but starts a transition to portfolio postures and trims some ground forces without greatly altering the tri-service mix. It seeks a moderate acceleration of allied efforts to build better forces for new missions.
3. *A Reengineered Posture.* This option pursues broader changes at a faster rate than Option 2. It reduces total manpower from 225,000 to 195,000 troops by cutting strength in Europe and Asia, while keeping it constant in the Persian Gulf. It seeks a faster transition to portfolio postures with RMA assets, and it alters the tri-service mix by reducing ground forces, increasing air forces, and keeping naval forces constant. It develops new bases and infrastructure at double the rate of Option 2, and it also seeks speedier allied improvements.
4. *A Rotational Posture.* This posture reduces the U.S. overseas presence to 150,000 troops by cutting European troop strength to 70,000 and Asian strength to 55,000. It is open-minded about equipping remaining units with better bases and infrastructure for operations in new places but relies heavily on power projection from the United States and on significantly enhanced allied forces to handle missions that U.S. forces overseas can no longer handle.
5. *A Persian Gulf-Heavy Posture.* This option deals with the possibility that new threats in the Persian Gulf could require more U.S. forces there. It elevates Gulf strength to 75,000 troops, while deploying enough forces in Europe and Asia to retain the current total presence of 225,000.
6. *An Asia-Heavy Posture.* This option deals with emergence of major trouble with China in Asia. It envisions a larger Asian pres-

ence of 115,000 troops in the form of more air and naval forces, with a total presence of 225,000 troops.

7. *A Global Threat Posture.* This option deals with the improbable development that all three regions face far bigger threats than now. It elevates total U.S. strength to 340,000 troops, about 80 percent of Cold War levels.
8. *A Stable World Posture.* This option deals with another improbable development: that all three regions will achieve greater stability than now seems likely. Accordingly, it reduces the U.S. overseas presence to 100,000 troops, with sufficient forces in each theater to send a political signal but not enough for major joint operations.

These eight options are not the only alternatives that can be imagined, but they help illuminate the choices and directions ahead, as a function of evolving U.S. priorities and alternative international conditions. Of them, the choice between Options 2 and 3 frames the practical issues that likely will be confronting U.S. policy for building the future overseas presence. These two options suggest that the decision could boil down to choosing whether to change in moderate ways or in faster and more comprehensive ways. Option 2 responds to arguments in favor of prudence and caution, while making tangible progress toward a better posture. Although Option 3 costs somewhat more and would be more difficult to carry out, it does a better job of meeting future requirements. Option 4 could come to pass if budgetary constraints or other pressures argue in favor of greater manpower reductions than currently contemplated. The other options provide viable choices only if their underlying circumstances come to pass.

## CONCLUSION

These options are merely illustrative, not definitive. What they illustrate is that the United States will have a broad range of choices at its disposal as it confronts the issue of whether, and how, to change its overseas presence. More fundamentally, these options illuminate the importance of thinking in terms of change, because, for a host of reasons, change is in the wind. The coming challenge is not to deny it but to carry it out wisely.



---

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

A number of individuals contributed to this study. Of particular importance were David Ochmanek, Robert Howe, and Steven Cambone. David Gompert, Paul Davis, Steven Larrabee, Stuart Johnson, and Hans Binnendijk also provided valuable observations and insights. A number of others also contributed, including individuals from the Office of Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and the Air Force. The author is solely responsible for this study's contents.

---

## ABBREVIATIONS

---

ARRC	ACE Rapid Reaction Corps
AFCENT	Allied Forces, Central Europe (NATO)
AFSOUTH	Allied Forces, Southern Europe (NATO)
ARG	Amphibious Ready Group
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Bde	Brigade
C4I	Command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence
C4ISR	Command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CINC	Commander in chief
CINCCENT	Commander in Chief, Central Command
CINCEUR	Commander in Chief, Europe
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific
CONUS	Continental United States
CS	Combat support
CSS	Combat service support

CVBG	Carrier battle group
DOB	Deployment Operating Base
DoD	Department of Defense
EUCOM	European Command
ECE	East Central Europe
FMI	Foreign military interaction
FWE	Fighter wing-equivalent
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IFV	Infantry fighting vehicle
JSTARS	Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System
LRC	Lesser regional contingency
MLRS	Multiple Launch Rocket System
MRC	Major regional contingency
MOB	Main Operating Base
MTW	Major theater war
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEA	Northeast Asia
NK	North Korea
optempo	Operating tempo
PACOM	Pacific Command
PCS	Permanent change of station
PFP	Partnership for Peace
POMCUS	Prepositioning of Materiel Configured in Unit Sets
PPBS	Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System
PSO	Peace support operation
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs

ROK	Republic of Korea
SEA	Southeast Asia
SLOC	Sea lines of communication
SSC	Smaller-scale contingency
TDY	Temporary duty
USAF	U.S. Air Force
USN	U.S. Navy
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction

---

Chapter One

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

The issue of future U.S. overseas forces can best be addressed by avoiding three fallacies:

1. Assuming that defending against specific military threats will be the main reason for deploying U.S. forces overseas in the coming years. A staple of the past, threat-based planning will continue to be used where real and active enemies exist. Some years from now, nonetheless, U.S. forces may be deployed overseas mainly to preserve peaceful stability and to promote related strategic objectives, rather than to guard against specific threats. These broader purposes are already being reflected in the U.S. government's national security strategy of shaping, responding, and preparing; they may become even more prominent in the coming years. Their growing importance must be grasped if future directions for overseas presence are to be analyzed insightfully.
2. Plunging headlong into an assessment of manpower levels and combat formations without first pausing to consider the future missions to be performed by U.S. forces overseas in peace, crisis, and war. Manpower levels and combat forces can be decided upon only after judgments about these missions—both strategic and operational—have been made. These missions will derive from old and new objectives, as well as from the international setting. Along with objectives, they are key to thinking clearly about the future U.S. overseas presence.
3. Viewing changes to the overseas posture solely in terms of higher or lower manpower levels. Change that occurs in other ways can be equally important: Manpower can be redistributed from one

theater to another; old forces can be replaced by new forces; new weapons can be introduced through modernization; and forces can use new bases and facilities, thereby opening the door to operations in new locations. The consequence might be the same overall manpower level as before but with a vastly different posture.

This study is an attempt to develop a new, future-oriented strategic planning framework for thinking about U.S. overseas presence over the coming decade and beyond. What this study especially offers is a multitheater and global perspective, putting forth a synthesized appraisal of how future international conditions might evolve, and of where U.S. objectives and missions for overseas presence may be headed. From these new objectives and missions, it provides a balanced evaluation of a spectrum of alternative future overseas presence postures. Although the study reaches a conclusion about which posture may be the soundest choice, its chief purpose is not to advocate a particular option. Instead, its purpose is to offer new ways of assessing the issues and options as a whole.

Many of the study's forecasts for the individual regions will not surprise specialists who handle those regions. Some of its regional policy recommendations are already being carried out. In Europe, for example, the shift to new U.S. missions in an enlarging NATO is already under way. When these separate regional forecasts and recommendations are added up, however, they translate into something broad and comprehensive whose larger implications are not yet fully understood: a significant change in how the U.S. government may be carrying out overseas presence on a global basis. The best way to grasp the future is to see the whole as well as the parts. This study endeavors to present that whole—in ways that offer constructive insights, not criticisms of current policies.

## CONTEMPLATING THE FUTURE

This appraisal of emerging international trends forms the basis for the conclusion that the U.S. overseas presence may be less preoccupied with preparing for major wars in the future than it was during the Cold War. The past decade has witnessed a major decline in the number and capabilities of true "enemies" the United States faces. This trend may continue, offering few classical threats; but multiple

dangers exist, as well as uncertain relationships with several countries that could become adversaries if the atmosphere sours. As a result, today's dominating focus on two major theater wars (MTWs) in the Persian Gulf and Korea might not hold in 2005–2010. By then, U.S. forces deployed overseas may be even more involved than now in peacetime environment-shaping and adapting: promoting integration within the enlarging Western community, building effective alliances and coalitions, encouraging regional stability, preventing conflict, and remaining capable of performing strategic U-turns if conditions suddenly change in surprising ways.

This prospect does not imply that major warfighting missions will disappear. In theaters still threatened by major war (such as the Persian Gulf), the U.S. overseas presence will remain a key instrument for initial defense and a vanguard for power projection from the United States. In such theaters, future threats may be more serious than they are today, including not only better conventional forces but also weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In other theaters, however, conducting peacetime missions and responding to lower-level crises may become more important than now. Moreover, U.S. forces likely will be carrying out these missions in new locations. Today, they mostly still operate within the limited strategic perimeter inherited from the Cold War. Tomorrow, they may be operating well outside this perimeter in all three theaters. Current overseas bases may become launching pads for projecting power into outlying areas, where U.S. involvements are growing and new missions will be performed. In a nutshell, the future U.S. overseas presence may be focused primarily on projecting stability while enlarging—quite a different core purpose than today's.

Because of the forthcoming Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), U.S. forces will be equipped with new weapons and other systems that may allow them to substitute capital for labor and to perform a wide variety of new operations in such areas as information dominance, rapid maneuver, and deep fires. All of these factors highlight the need to start thinking about how the U.S. overseas presence can best be designed so that it can continue operating effectively.

The exact overseas presence posture to be deployed in 10–15 years will depend on the situation then, and cannot be forecast with airtight certainty now. What can be said is that a new style of thinking will be required so that options can be appraised intelligently.

Today, continuity seems to be the watchword. In the future, the watchwords probably will be dynamism, flexibility, and adaptability. Indeed, the U.S. overseas presence may change its contours several times as future international security affairs unfold over the next decade or two. A proper future posture may be something other than a larger or smaller version of the current posture. For example, the future posture may have proportionately fewer ground forces but more air and naval forces, plus more command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) assets and outlying infrastructure. A joint posture will still be needed, yet the growing capabilities of airpower may provide a basis for innovative and attractive ways to enhance the strategic effectiveness of U.S. forces overseas.

More fundamentally, the future posture in regions not menaced by imposing threats may be designed to provide a flexible portfolio of assets for multiple purposes, rather than a tightly integrated posture designed solely for warfighting. Regardless of the design concept, U.S. forces stationed in each theater will need to be shaped in a manner that reflects anticipated changes in the posture in the continental United States (CONUS) and in the forces of allies and coalition partners. What will be needed is a U.S. overseas presence that helps lead alliances and coalition relationships toward reform, and facilitates power projection from CONUS by a new U.S. military posture based on RMA technologies and associated changes in force structures. The U.S. overseas presence thus should be seen as one important part of a larger security agenda and defense capability, the key issue for which will be what future objectives and missions will guide the U.S. overseas presence.

In addressing this issue, the United States will need to strike a sensible balance between continuity and change in preparing its future overseas presence. Here, *sensible balance* has two meanings: that continuity will still be an important signal of constancy, but not a code word for stagnation, and that change should be prudent, guided by a sense of strategic direction and aspiration to produce a better, more effective posture than that of today.

Much depends on how the international system evolves but, most probably, the United States will neither be withdrawing its forces in some wholesale way because enduring peace has arrived nor increasing them hugely because big new threats have appeared.



Instead, it will confront the more complicated challenge of working with overseas manpower levels that are similar to today's, but using them to design new forces and activities that can carry out new strategic purposes.

## ORGANIZATION

Chapter Two begins the analysis by describing and evaluating the current U.S. posture overseas. This chapter is intended for the general reader who needs a primer on the current situation. Specialists may want to proceed directly to the following chapters, which discuss prospects for future change. Chapter Three hypothesizes future international conditions. Chapter Four assesses the U.S. strategic agenda ahead, including future U.S. national objectives and military missions in key theaters. Chapter Five carries the analysis a step further by examining future military requirements and capabilities for the U.S. overseas presence, as a function of new operational concepts, the changing service contributions to joint doctrine, the impending RMA, and the future roles played by allied forces. Chapter Six examines alternative future force postures for the U.S. overseas presence, including ideas for reengineering this presence. Chapter Seven provides conclusions and recommendations.

---

**CURRENT U.S. OVERSEAS PRESENCE**

---

The best way to begin to address the future is by analyzing the present. In thinking about overseas presence, U.S. defense planning faces two challenges. The first is dealing with the current strategic situation—the coming 1 to 3 years—using existing assets to pursue today's goals. The second is preparing for the more distant future—the period 5 to 15 years from now—and shaping it. This challenge requires that evolving trends be understood and responses to them designed.

The prospect of great change and uncertainty make planning for the distant future quite hard—far harder than during the Cold War—because today's posture may not be the one required for tomorrow. Force planners cannot ignore the future: The programming decisions they make today will go a long way toward determining the posture of tomorrow. Important investment decisions must be made with major downstream consequences, which means that the future must be anticipated and planned for carefully, not postponed.

This study begins by appraising the current posture, because it provides an existing foundation for building toward the future. The task facing defense planners will not be one of constructing an entirely new posture; rather, it will be to decide how the current posture is to be changed in evolutionary ways with large cumulative effects. Therefore, the long-range analysis can best begin by asking, What are the features of the current U.S. overseas presence, and how well is it performing?

## THE CURRENT OVERSEAS PRESENCE: RESOURCES AND ASSETS

Overseas presence is a policy instrument: a means to an end, not an end in itself. The United States deploys military forces abroad for specific purposes, and the posture, ideally, should reflect these purposes. One purpose is to perform the important but narrow mission of waging war and otherwise carrying out combat operations on short notice. An equally important purpose, however, is political and strategic. Overseas-presence forces are intended to work with the forces of friendly and allied countries, as well as with U.S. forces based in CONUS, to influence the behavior of many countries and therefore to help shape the international environment. Both purposes must be kept in mind when judging the performance of the current posture and future requirements.

A legitimate question can be raised about whether the term *overseas presence* is the best name for this endeavor. During the Cold War, the relevant term was *forward defense*. This term was discarded when the Cold War ended, and it was replaced first by *forward presence*, then by *overseas presence*. One effect has been to strip away provocative connotations; an additional effect has been to create a term that seems devoid of purpose or activity. The term *overseas presence* merely states that U.S. forces are deployed overseas, but it says nothing about their ends and means. Perhaps a better term might be *overseas security engagement* or *overseas security commitments*, terms that convey a sense of strategic purpose, rather than presence for its own sake.

For convenience I use *overseas presence*. However, I provide a comprehensive definition of this term because it includes so many things:

*Overseas presence* is the set of U.S. military assets and activities abroad that, as a complement to power projection from CONUS, engages in purposeful security commitments and management efforts on behalf of a broad spectrum of national objectives that are “strategic”—that is, political, economic, and military in nature.

The estimated cost of the current U.S. overseas presence is about \$10 billion to \$15 billion annually. This is not the expense of “buying”

the forces but is instead the cost of stationing them overseas and of carrying out associated security activities. Using about 4 percent to 6 percent of Department of Defense's (DoD's) budget, overseas presence also requires about 15 percent of DoD's total, active-duty military manpower.

These allocations do not seem large on the surface. However, in relation to other allocations, they take on added significance. For example, DoD's current annual procurement budget of only \$43 billion—a small amount by historical standards—could be increased by 23 percent to 35 percent if overseas presence did not have to be funded. Likewise, the stationing of 15 percent of U.S. troops overseas imposes turbulence on DoD's personnel policies; it also means that some important CONUS units have less manpower and readiness than might be desired. Overseas stationing, moreover, makes it harder for the services to develop common doctrine and procedures among their combat and support units. Therefore, although overseas presence may not cripple DoD's budget, it does impose a significant opportunity cost. For it to be justified, it must produce strategic returns that are commensurate with its expense and the sacrifice of other defense assets.

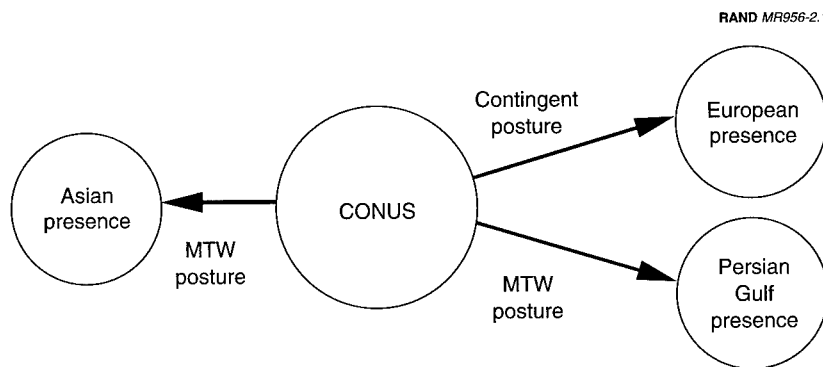
DoD can fund the current overseas presence. In future years, the ready availability of equivalent resources may be less certain because, as the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) pointed out, DoD's procurement needs will rise as new weapons become ready for production. DoD's procurement budget is already slated to rise to \$54 billion to \$60 billion in the next few years, and an effort is under way to reduce DoD's domestic overhead and infrastructure to generate additional funds for procurement. To the extent this effort falls short, pressures could arise from within DoD to reduce spending for overseas presence. In addition, DoD's military manpower will be reduced below the current level of about 1.46 million personnel, to 1.36 million. If further reductions are made, additional pressure could be expected to reduce the current overseas presence as a way of conserving manpower.

In past years, DoD has shied away from sacrificing overseas presence on the altar of fiscal stringency. Even if this approach is carried forth, the overseas-presence account seems unlikely to benefit from additional money and manpower in the future. This reality affects the

future options that can be considered and the improvement programs that can be launched.<sup>1</sup>

### Overseas Presence as Part of U.S. Defense Strategy

Figure 2.1 illustrates how the overseas presence fits into current U.S. defense strategy. This strategy interlocks overseas presence and power projection so that both components work together and support each other. Overseas presence deploys the assets that are crucial for power projection from CONUS to work effectively. The large U.S. forces based in CONUS, in turn, provide a reservoir of projectable assets that magnify the influence and effectiveness of overseas presence. Over the past two decades, U.S. power-projection capabilities have increased significantly as strategic mobility forces have improved and prepositioning has been enhanced in multiple



- U.S. power-projection has greatly improved in past 20 years—better prepositioning and mobility
- Overseas presence is 60% of Cold War level

**Figure 2.1—U.S. Defense Strategy and Power Projection**

<sup>1</sup>For data on U.S. overseas presence and other defense programs, see Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen's *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (Cohen, 1997).

theaters. As a result, the power-projection component of U.S. strategy can now carry weightier burdens than it did in the past, so that overseas presence can carry proportionately fewer burdens. Yet, as discussed below, overseas missions will perform functions that power projection cannot accomplish, regardless of how much power projection improves. As a result, U.S. defense strategy will continue to require a robust overseas presence for the foreseeable future.

Today's U.S. overseas presence is about 60 percent what it was during the Cold War. This downsizing took place mostly in Europe when the Warsaw Pact collapsed and Soviet troops withdrew from Eastern Europe, thereby greatly lessening NATO's fears of war and surprise attack. During the Cold War, the United States deployed 330,000 troops in Europe and committed a large portion of its CONUS posture to reinforcement roles for a potential NATO-Warsaw Pact war. Today's U.S. defense strategy in Europe is no longer focused on preparing for theaterwide war. Accordingly, it calls for a smaller European presence intended primarily for peacetime NATO missions; this presence is backed up by a contingent CONUS reinforcement posture for limited crisis-response missions. By contrast, U.S. overseas forces in Asia and the Persian Gulf still face the risk of MTW and surprise attack and are therefore designed with wartime contingencies in mind; they are backed up by large CONUS reinforcements that are capable of fighting MTW conflicts in each theater. Because DoD sizes its posture to be able to fight two concurrent MTWs, requirements for the Korean and Persian Gulf MTWs would use most of the forces based in CONUS.

The United States today has separate regional defense strategies, rather than the integrated global defense strategy that dominated planning during the Cold War, because the United States no longer faces the risk of having to fight major conflicts against a peer rival in multiple theaters concurrently. Yet these separate regional strategies do not exist in isolation. When added together, they create what is still, in reality, a "global framework" for planning U.S. forces: Requirements in all three theaters must be taken into account in designing the U.S. defense program and force structure. The need to meet requirements in all three theaters affects the CONUS posture, but, because it mandates sizable peacetime deployments in all three theaters, it has an especially large effect on the U.S. overseas presence.

## Reasons for Overseas Presence

Exactly why are U.S. forces deployed abroad in large numbers even though the threat of global war no longer exists? Wartime defense is far from the only reason. Many political, strategic, and other factors are at work in the planning calculus, as Table 2.1 demonstrates.

A key implication of Table 2.1 is that the overseas-presence calculus involves a great deal more than preparing for wars and surprise attacks. The United States maintains forces abroad for many other purposes, including building alliance relationships and related assets that preserve peace and help prevent wars from occurring. Even when the immediate threat of war fades in a particular theater, U.S. forces may be kept there. As long as the potential for instability and conflict exists in strategic locations where vital U.S. interests are at stake, the United States will face a powerful rationale for a strong overseas presence that can help fulfill its numerous objectives.

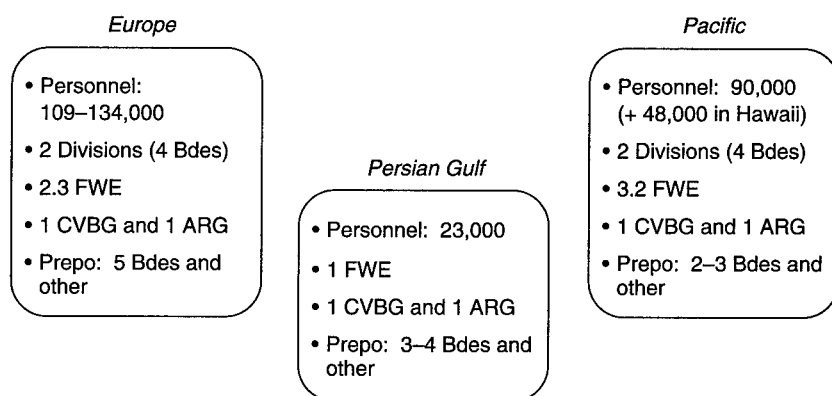
## Composition of Overseas Presence

Figure 2.2 shows how the current U.S. overseas presence is distributed among the three key theaters. The Annual DoD Report to Congress indicates a total manpower level of 235,000, yet rotational deployments of units assigned to CONUS (such as naval forces) can elevate the number to nearly 260,000 at times. U.S. Army troops account for about 44 percent of the total; USAF, about 30 percent; and Navy and Marine personnel, 26 percent. DoD deploys a joint posture of combat units from all three services in each theater. The U.S. posture in Europe of 109,000 to 134,000 personnel includes 2 Army divisions (4 brigades); 2.3 USAF fighter wing equivalents (FWEs); 1 Navy carrier battle group (CVBG) and 1 Marine Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) in the Mediterranean. The U.S. posture in Asia comprises about 90,000 personnel including 1 Army division in Korea (2 brigades); 1 Marine Expeditionary Force in Okinawa (2 brigades); 3.2 FWEs of USAF and Marine aircraft based in Korea, Japan, and Okinawa; and 1 CVBG and 1 ARG in the western Pacific. The current Persian Gulf posture arose in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War to conduct ongoing security missions vis-à-vis Iraq. Before the Gulf war, virtually no U.S. combat forces were deployed on Arab soil: The U.S. presence was normally limited to advisers and offshore

**Table 2.1**  
**Reasons for Overseas Presence**

Strategic and Political Reasons	Military Reasons
Enhance U.S. influence and credibility as superpower leader	Maintain situational awareness and information dominance
Directly protect U.S. interests, sea lines of communication (SLOC), and access to Eurasian land mass	Train and exercise with allies and coalition partners
Maintain effective alliances using proper strategies and forces	Develop doctrine for and familiarity with local regions and contingencies
Maintain stable balances, reassure vulnerable countries, dissuade rogues	Provide assets for quick response to local emergencies and needs
	Establish reception facilities for reinforcement and onward movement
	Provide deterrence and initial defense if aggression occurs

RAND MR956-2.2



Total: 235,000–259,000 (includes 12,000 in Western Hemisphere)

**Figure 2.2—Current U.S. Overseas Presence**



naval forces. Today's presence includes 1 USAF FWE, 1 CVBG, and 1 ARG, plus other smaller units. The Navy's CVBG and ARG forces in all three theaters are typically on station about 75 percent of the time, because of constraints on operating tempo (optempo). In all three theaters, DoD deploys several brigade sets of Army and Marine equipment, plus other assets, to allow for prompt reinforcement in a crisis.

The U.S. overseas presence includes, however, a good deal more than these major combat formations. Indeed, the principal combat formations account for only about two-thirds of U.S. military personnel stationed overseas, and they consume only about two-thirds of the funding spent on overseas presence. Most of the remaining personnel are assigned to headquarters staffs, other C4I units, and various logistic support units—all of which make important contributions to overseas-presence missions. The combat formations themselves are also not a constant in the overseas-presence equation. Their effectiveness depends heavily on their optempo, as well as on their training and exercise programs, all of which can fluctuate as a function of funding. In addition, the existing network of bases, facilities, and infrastructure in each theater plays a major role in determining the effectiveness of each theater posture. Another important contributor to overseas presence is security assistance and foreign military interactions (FMIs); which comprise outreach programs to new partners, such as International Military Education and Training, Partnership for Peace (PFP), visitations, and commander in chief (CINC) initiatives.

The role played by prepositioned equipment deserves special mention. The idea of prepositioning equipment stocks for CONUS-based forces first rose to prominence in the 1970s, when DoD concluded that prepositioning provided a viable way to accelerate troop deployments to Central Europe in the event of a surprise attack. Since then, prepositioning has become more widespread, and has recently been adjusted to deal with new challenges. Today DoD's prepositioned assets include

- three Army brigade sets in Central and Southern Europe, plus a Marine brigade set in Norway; one Army brigade set in the Persian Gulf, with a second set to be added by 2000; and another Army brigade set in Korea

- three Marine brigade sets afloat in maritime prepositioning ships in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, and western Pacific
- one Army brigade set, with support assets and munitions, afloat in ships in the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific; also, USAF support equipment and stocks are deployed ashore and afloat in the three theaters.

In total, equipment sets for 10–11 Army and Marine brigades are deployed abroad. Today DoD has eight Army and Marine brigades stationed abroad. In a crisis, prepositioning allows this presence to grow to 18–19 brigades within a few weeks, far faster than if the equipment for reinforcing units had to be shipped from CONUS.

These often-unseen assets thus play a major role in determining how overseas-presence missions are carried out and whether these missions are effective. The U.S. presence in each theater is therefore best viewed as a true “defense program” when it is composed of multiple different assets, all of which work together. Because resources are always scarce, the CINCs and DoD face the continuing challenge of not only determining the size of the overall presence in each theater, but also achieving an effective balance of investments and spending among the various subcomponents. For example, abnormally high spending on the combat forces can produce an imbalanced program if it results in imprudent shortfalls in spending on C4I, infrastructure, prepositioning, and FMIs. A case can be made that a separate Future Year Defense Program/Program Objective Memorandum program for overseas presence should be created in DoD’s Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) to help plan these investments effectively. Even short of this step, continuing close attention to the overseas-presence program is needed to ensure that a balanced posture is maintained in each theater.

## **EVALUATING THE CURRENT OVERSEAS PRESENCE:**

### **Strategic Considerations**

For the most part, the current overseas presence is contributing effectively to the pursuit of U.S. strategic goals and the implementation of U.S. foreign policy and defense strategy. The current posture represents a decisive affirmation that the United States intends to

remain engaged in global affairs even though the Cold War has ended. More specifically, the current posture provides continuing U.S. military strength in both Europe and Asia, and at least a minimum presence in the Persian Gulf.

Nonetheless, the anomalies of the current posture should be noted. The current posture deploys the largest forces in the least threatened theater, Europe, which is no longer regarded as menaced by the threat of major war. It deploys the smallest forces in the most vulnerable theater: the Persian Gulf, which is threatened by war and potential surprise attack and has weak allies. As for Asia, the current posture is located mostly in Northeast Asia in defense of Korea and Japan. Apart from the episodic deployments of U.S. Navy, Marine, and USAF forces, it is not truly an Asia-wide posture. The current U.S. overseas presence thus cannot be portrayed as necessarily reflecting an optimal design.

The three regional CINCs—Commander in Chief, Europe (CINCEUR), Commander in Chief, Central Command (CINCCENT), and Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC)—express satisfaction with current force levels, provided reinforcement and mobility programs are adequate. Yet they are concerned about certain details. One common concern is that growing peace support operations (PSOs) and related contingencies are draining funds for optempo, training, and exercises, thus eroding readiness.<sup>2</sup> A second concern is that the CINCs are being given inadequate funds for new infrastructure, facilities, FMIs, and security assistance. At budget time each year, they typically ask for 25 percent to 50 percent more funds than they receive in these areas. A third concern is that the CINCs are being asked to perform multiple new missions (such as outreach to new partners and old adversaries), while trying to stay prepared for major war. The alleged effect is that their forces are pulled in different directions.

A unifying theme of these concerns is that the regional CINCs are being given large and growing responsibilities, but without the authority and resources to carry them out. The Goldwater-Nichol legislation of the 1980s elevated the stature of the Chairman of the

---

<sup>2</sup>Cohen (1997) says that the costs for contingency operations in FY96 were \$3.2 billion.

Joint Chiefs of Staff, but it also aimed to enhance the roles played by the CINCs. A principal effect has been to place more pressure on the CINCs to become leaders in executing national policy and fostering joint doctrine within DoD. These pressures were magnified when the post-Cold War environment compelled the CINCs to begin moving away from preoccupation with warfighting issues toward a more political and strategic focus. Today's CINCs therefore have more-complicated agendas than their predecessors, a trend that seems likely to accelerate in the coming years.

In carrying out national policy, however, the CINCs must follow instructions from the interagency team in Washington. The effect often is to tightly restrain their latitude for initiating and coordinating regional policies. They also have little direct control over their budgetary resources. Budget decisions are still made mostly by the services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, which have priorities of their own. Thus, although the CINCs now have a larger role in defense planning than before, they do not have PPBS-anointed programs for their theaters. The effect has been to marginalize their influence, leaving them hostage to the decisions of others.

The Pentagon's evaluation of the U.S. overseas presence derives from its national-level perspective. The Pentagon expresses satisfaction with current troop levels, but it does have strategic concerns:

1. The U.S. and allied defense postures in both the Persian Gulf and Korea have "Achilles' heels" (discussed below) that, if exploited, could leave them vulnerable in the event of an MTW.
2. The current overseas presence strains the CONUS posture, including its readiness and modernization.
3. Competing DoD and Congressional priorities prevent funding of CINC initiatives.
4. Firm political commitments to current troop levels in Europe and Asia limit DoD's flexibility to deploy forces elsewhere in response to new requirements.
5. Key allies cannot project strong military power outside their borders, thereby leaving projection missions mostly in the hands of the United States.

Outside observers echo many of these worries. Yet these worries do not yet seem powerful enough to mobilize a consensus in favor of radical change in any direction.

### **Theater-by-Theater Appraisal**

In Europe, the U.S. military presence is operating effectively, but because this theater is stable and no longer threatened by major war, questions can be raised about the enduring requirement for stationing 100,000 U.S. troops there. U.S. policy is centered on preserving, adapting, and enlarging NATO to make Europe more stable, while building partnership relations with Russia and other countries and controlling local strife. The challenge facing the United States and NATO is to implement this policy successfully in a complex diplomatic setting.

The dominant issues are whether NATO reform and enlargement will succeed, whether a Europe-wide security architecture can be built, and whether local conflicts (such as those in Bosnia) can be contained. NATO reform is gaining momentum, yet the alliance faces many internal stresses and challenges as it endeavors to fashion a new strategic concept, a proper command structure, and viable military forces for the coming era. Enlargement into the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region will begin soon, posing new defense requirements that must be met if a hollow commitment is to be avoided. Although Bosnia and other ethnic-national conflicts remain worrisome, the biggest concern for the goal of an all-Europe security architecture is Russia's uncertain future. For all these reasons, a sizable U.S. military presence remains an indispensable instrument of U.S. policy and a key factor in safeguarding Europe's stability—no European government wants U.S. forces to withdraw or even to be reduced.

The situation in the Persian Gulf is more worrisome than that in Europe. Although the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) is operating effectively, it is laboring in a difficult setting. It is constrained by a small U.S. military presence and by slow growth of prepositioned equipment, and it continues to conduct demanding PSOs aimed at carrying out United Nations mandates against Iraq. Notwithstanding the Western coalition's overwhelming victory in the 1991 Gulf war, the strategic situation remains precarious and is evolving

toward an uncertain outcome. U.S. policy is focused on deterrence of aggression in the Gulf, dual containment of Iraq and Iran, preservation of a Western coalition that includes Arab partners, and encouragement of the Middle East peace process.

The West's dependence on imported oil continues to make this region a vital U.S. and allied interest. Over the past 15 years, the U.S. military position in the Gulf has improved greatly because of the growth of CENTCOM's power-projection capabilities from CONUS and the progress in developing a local military infrastructure and some prepositioning. However, although CENTCOM's current presence in the Gulf is a stabilizing factor, key strategic and political problems continue to loom. Although deterrence seems intact, the long-term viability of the U.S. dual-containment strategy is uncertain, as is the course of the Middle East peace process. An underlying concern is the future of Islamic fundamentalism, radical Arab nationalism, and the stability of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. The region still continues to face a real threat of crisis and war. This judgment is borne out by the several tense occasions since 1993 in which the United States has been compelled to rush large forces to the Gulf or to use limited force, and by Iraq's still-menacing stance.

The military issues are also serious. One concern is local instability, for example, fear that the Saudi government will lose its hold on power, thereby denying the United States the local support it needs to carry out its power-projection strategy. An equal concern is vulnerability to surprise attack, including fear that Iraq might again invade Kuwait and seek to overrun that country and key portions of Saudi Arabia before U.S. forces can react in strength. As Iraq and other adversaries improve their forces, their capability for offensive operations and surprise attacks against Western interests will grow. If they acquire WMD, their willingness to pursue aggression might increase, as will the dangers facing U.S. and Western forces. A key vulnerability is that the United States lacks sufficient military infrastructure outside the Gulf if U.S. forces are required to operate in outlying areas. All of these factors pose current and future problems for U.S. defense strategy in the Persian Gulf.

This still-dangerous situation could call for a large U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf, but the volatility of Arab politics bars the

way to any large, permanent presence. If United Nations operations against Iraq are terminated, political pressures may rise for even the currently small U.S. military presence to be reduced in deference to Arab political sensitivities. As a result, the United States remains saddled with a small rotational presence and a mostly power-projection strategy from CONUS, and lacks the large, permanent regional presence needed to make this strategy fully effective.

The situation in Asia lies somewhere between Europe and the Persian Gulf in the degree of instability and danger facing the United States. Here, the Pacific Command (PACOM) is operating effectively and benefits from widespread support for a strong U.S. military presence. Because of fear of the destabilizing consequences, practically no country wants U.S. military withdrawal, although China's attitude seems ambivalent. The dominant problem facing PACOM is that of dealing with a huge region of diverse politics and strategic affairs. U.S. strategy focuses on maintaining deterrence and defense in Korea and Northeast Asia, while increasingly pursuing strategic balance and engagement elsewhere in Asia. The effect is to challenge the capabilities of PACOM's posture in the region.

There are several key strategic issues in Asia. On the Korean peninsula, deterrence remains intact because of a strong U.S.-South Korea defense posture, but North Korea is volatile and unpredictable. Its combination of severe internal troubles and offensive military power plausibly could lead it to launch an attack against South Korea. In all likelihood, U.S.-South Korea forces would prevail in a new Korean war, but the risk is that Seoul, because of its proximity to the demilitarized zone, could be badly damaged and temporarily lost in the initial stages. Elsewhere in Asia, the U.S.-Japan alliance remains strong, and the United States is pursuing improved economic and political relations with other Asian countries. The great uncertainty is whether China's growing economic and military power will translate into an assertive foreign policy aimed at enhancing its influence across Asia. Another important concern is the growing economic strength of Southeast Asia. Both factors create uncertainty about Asia's future stability.

Militarily, the United States enjoys a strong position in Northeast Asia. The only current trouble is growing local criticism of its presence in Okinawa. The largest uncertainty is whether widespread

support for a strong U.S. presence in Asia will continue if the threat of war fades in Korea and Korean unification occurs. Yet this uncertainty is by no means the only concern as a new era unfolds. Across the huge region stretching from Taiwan to Southeast Asia, the United States has vital interests at stake: preserving control of vital sea lanes, maintaining access to key markets, and supporting friendly democracies. Even so, the United States possesses almost no military presence in Southeast Asia and, apart from naval forces, little capability to project power there. Moreover, key U.S. allies (such as South Korea and Japan) possess little power-projection capability beyond their borders, and most Southeast Asian countries are themselves militarily weak. In addition, Asia has no powerful collective security mechanisms, even though its growing economic strength is making this region an important factor in the global power equation. The combination of the region's growing importance and a military-security vacuum makes Asia a factor to be considered in current and future U.S. national security policy and defense strategy.

Figure 2.3 illustrates how the strategic situations in the three theaters currently compare with each other. The y-axis portrays three different strategic situations:

- an upper "green zone," in which the regional situation appears stable and key U.S. strategic objectives are being attained to a highly satisfactory degree
- a middle "yellow zone," in which the regional situation is judged to be uncertain and key U.S. strategic objectives are being attained to a moderate degree (that is, they are not severely threatened)
- A lower "red zone," in which the regional situation is judged unstable and U.S. interests are seriously threatened.

The figure suggests that the three theaters differ in the zones in which they fall. At the moment, the European theater falls mostly in the green zone, with some concerns because of the alliance reform and enlargement issues discussed above. The Asian theater falls mostly in the yellow zone, with some red zone characteristics because of the confrontation in Korea. The Persian Gulf theater falls mostly in the red zone because of its precarious strategic and military



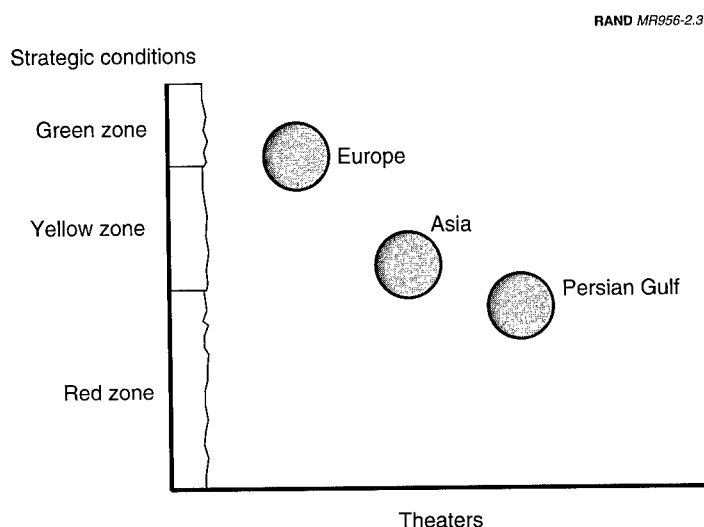


Figure 2.3—Current Multitheater Strategic Situation

situation, with some yellow zone characteristics because of U.S. power-projection capabilities. Although this portrayal oversimplifies complex situations, it drives home a key strategic point. The United States faces varying degrees of challenge and dangers in these three theaters, with differing implications for the U.S. overseas military presence in each case. The current global situation, moreover, is not constant; the state of affairs in each theater could change in either direction as the future unfolds.

## MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS

U.S. forces stationed overseas perform specific military missions in peace, crisis, and war. During peacetime, they conduct training and exercises with allies and other coalition partners. They may also perform a host of limited operations, such as disaster relief, humanitarian aid, and peacekeeping. During crises, they carry out a wide spectrum of operations ranging from peace enforcement to the limited use of force as part of U.S. crisis intervention policies. During wartime, they carry out the initial defense and assist in the deployment of U.S. forces from CONUS.

Are current U.S. overseas-presence forces adequate for these missions? In general, U.S. forces in Europe and Asia have sufficient assets to handle most peacetime and limited crisis-response missions. Shortfalls occurring in these theaters typically require the deployment of limited, special assets from CONUS (such as trained peace-keeping units) rather than a big infusion of additional forces. By contrast, the U.S. posture in the Persian Gulf is far smaller and more limited in its ability to perform these missions. Especially if ground missions must be performed, the U.S. posture there requires significant reinforcement from CONUS.

What about the ability of U.S. overseas-presence forces to handle major wartime missions? Current U.S. defense strategy calls for the ability to defend against two concurrent MTWs. The contingencies deemed most likely to occur are MTWs in Korea and the Persian Gulf. Although overseas-presence forces are intended to provide initial defense assets to these MTWs, the bulk of the combat load is to be carried by CONUS-based forces.

Overseas-presence forces provide an early, visible manifestation of the U.S. military commitment, thereby reassuring allies and deterring enemies. They provide C4I assets—including planning staffs, communications networks, and intelligence assets—that are critical to establishing situational awareness and information dominance. Deployed U.S. air forces provide high-technology interceptors that greatly enhance allied air defense capabilities. In Korea, the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division and other combat units provide artillery, anti-armor, helicopter assault, and surface-to-air missiles that complement South Korea Army forces in important ways. In both theaters, other U.S. units provide logistic support to allied forces and reception facilities for the arrival of U.S. reinforcements.

The issue is whether U.S. overseas-presence and allied forces can perform these critical initial defense functions long enough in the early stages to allow sufficient time for large U.S. reinforcements from CONUS to arrive in sufficient strength to carry out the full war plan. The U.S. presence in Korea appears adequate to the task, not only because of its own strengths but also because it is joined by a large South Korean posture. By contrast, the military situation in the Persian Gulf is more problematic for two reasons: (1) U.S. forces routinely deployed in the Gulf lack the strength of their counterparts in Korea, and (2) allied forces are weaker and more vulnerable to

being overpowered by a short-warning enemy attack. This evaluation does not mean that the Persian Gulf cannot be defended; after all, it already has been successfully defended once. It does mean that the Persian Gulf is less well-defended than Korea, partially because of the absence of larger U.S. forces stationed there in peacetime.

The strategic significance of this evaluation is best judged by addressing five basic questions:

1. Are these two MTWs real enough to be taken seriously, or are they merely low-probability events that worry defense planners but are highly unlikely to occur?
2. Is the overall U.S. defense posture capable of waging two MTWs, provided CONUS-based forces arrive on the scene?
3. Can CONUS-based forces, in fact, deploy fast enough?
4. Is it possible to improve the initial defense capability in the Persian Gulf without stationing larger U.S. forces there?
5. How well would U.S. forces perform if an MTW or a larger conflict breaks out in a location other than Korea and the Persian Gulf?

By any measure, the North Korean threat seems real. The North Korean Army is composed of 38 divisions, has large numbers of artillery and tanks, and is deployed forward in locations suggesting an offensive strategy. The Korean peninsula has been a focal point of continuing tension and periodic small crises since the armistice was signed in 1953. And there have been numerous war scares—the last occurring in the mid-1990s when negotiations over North Korea's alleged nuclear program nearly broke down. The outcome of the peace process now beginning to unfold in Korea remains to be seen, but until North Korea's offensive strategy and capability are diminished, the Korea MTW is likely to continue as a serious contingency for U.S. defense planning.

By contrast, some analysts dispute the plausibility of another Persian Gulf war because Iraqi forces were defeated so decisively in 1991. Yet the Iraqi government does not seem to have abandoned its menacing intent toward Kuwait and other states. Saddam Hussein misread Western resolve in 1990, so he might do it again, especially if he considers the West's powerful response in the last war an unusual political event that is unlikely to be repeated. For example, he might con-

clude that the United States is too preoccupied elsewhere to respond, that European countries will not support a decisive response, and that Arab politics might prevent another anti-Iraq coalition from forming.

Much would depend on Iraq's reading of the military balance. Even though U.S. forces would again overpower Iraq's forces if a campaign similar to Desert Storm was repeated, Iraq might seek to carry out an asymmetric strategy aimed at eroding U.S. advantages, for example, by driving deeper early and by contesting U.S. entry into the region. In 1991 Iraq's forces were quite large but badly outclassed in quality. This situation was partly due to weaknesses in leadership, doctrine, organization, and readiness, all deficiencies that can be remedied. Although Iraq's forces today are smaller than in 1990, they remain equipped for offensive action, but still apparently suffer from readiness problems. Moreover, although public attention is focused on a potential WMD threat, Iraq is taking steps to upgrade its conventional forces, as is Iran. This development could embolden both countries to contemplate challenging U.S. military power in the Persian Gulf.

U.S. defense strategy regards both contingencies as sufficiently real to justify not only a deterrent and defense posture, but also a capability for a decisive response that could culminate in powerful counteroffensives against both opponents if the situation so warrants. The combination of concurrent contingencies and demanding operational plans in both theaters leads to the conclusion that sizable U.S. forces are needed for these two MTWs.

DoD judges that the current posture is adequate to handle two MTWs. This determination is based on the premise that each contingency likely will require a "building block" posture of 6 to 7 divisions, 10 fighter wings, and 4 to 5 CVBGs. Even without ready Army reserves, the current U.S. posture has enough forces to generate two of these building blocks, which would be enough for a two-MTW strategy. DoD further argues that major reductions in the force posture would dangerously erode the two-MTW strategy by leaving insufficient forces for one of the two conflicts.

DoD's position, however, is not universally shared. Some critics assert that the current posture can be reduced without eroding the strategy, others assert that any cutbacks will destroy the strategy, and

still others claim that the strategy is not viable now and requires more forces. DoD's critics are far from united in their criticisms.

Many of these contentions are based on "single-point" estimates of requirements and capabilities. A better way of thinking about the subject is to address the conditions under which the current posture could succeed or fail. For example, the current U.S. posture may well be capable of handling the scenarios being postulated by DoD. These scenarios, however, are based on assumptions about many variables, including warning time, buildup rates, and force effectiveness. Actual wars in Korea and the Persian Gulf could take many different forms—for good or ill—for these scenarios, thereby affecting the adequacy of the U.S. posture. Another consideration is that if the political future unfolds in unforeseen ways, U.S. forces might be called upon to fight one or more MTWs in locations other than Korea and the Gulf.

Figure 2.4 helps illustrate how the U.S. capability could vary as a function of the MTWs being encountered. The existing U.S. posture is sized to defend against two "moderately difficult" MTWs. The Korea and Persian Gulf contingencies fall into this category because adversary forces are large and capable of short-warning attacks, but are not as modernized as U.S. forces. If the two MTWs prove to be easier than expected—for example, if allies perform better than anticipated or enemy forces fight poorly—the current U.S. posture could handle 2.5 MTWs. But if conditions are worse than anticipated, the U.S. capability could fall below the two-MTW standard. In a very demanding MTW fought under quite difficult conditions—for example, if a larger and better-equipped enemy attacks on difficult terrain in bad weather—the U.S. posture could handle only one MTW.

#### **MAJOR THEATER WAR DEFENSE IN THE PERSIAN GULF AND KOREA**

An additional complication, as Figure 2.5 suggests, is that U.S. forces might be committed to other contingencies at the time that concurrent MTWs erupt. As mentioned previously, provided no other operations are being carried out, the current posture has enough forces to handle two MTWs under moderate conditions. But one

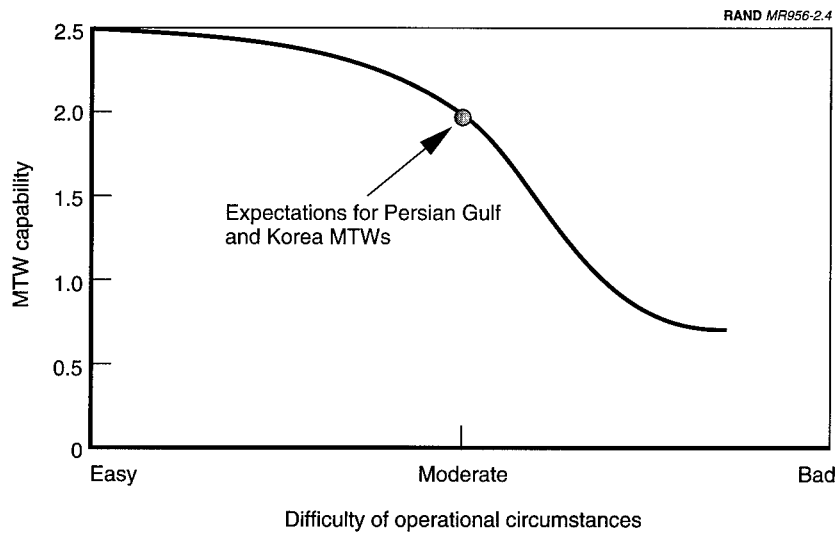


Figure 2.4—MTW Capability as a Function of Military Conditions

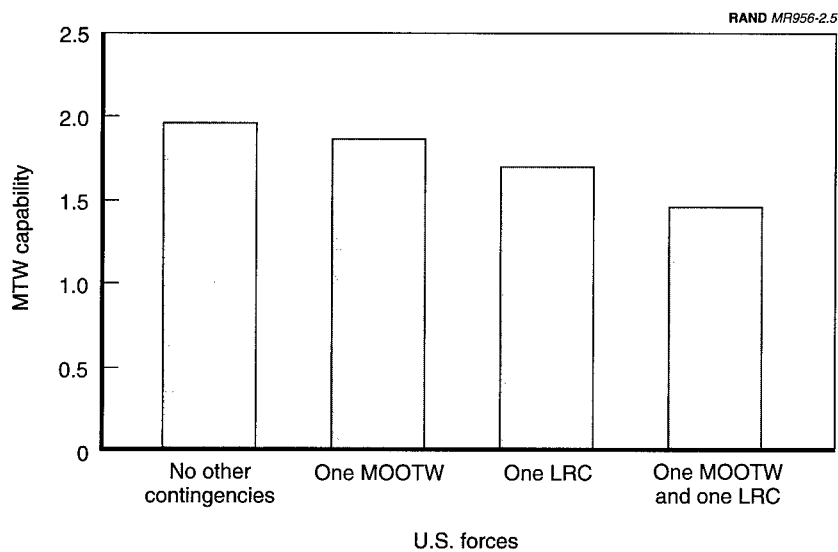


Figure 2.5—Force Availability for Two MTWs

ongoing lesser regional contingency (LRC) could erode this capability or at least delay deployment by diverting forces, and the combination of an LRC and a military operation other than war, such as a peacekeeping mission, could erode capability even further. In this event, the prevailing hope is that the forces committed to other contingencies could be extracted in timely fashion and redeployed to the MTWs. Another option would be to activate U.S. reserve component forces or to seek additional help from allies. Both options protect against the risk that a situation worse than two MTWs might be encountered.

The U.S. strategy and force posture also runs some risks that the MTWs could be more difficult than expected or that other large operations might be under way. Yet the administration regards these risks as acceptable because the likelihood of their occurring does not seem high. However, some critics question the premise that two MTWs might erupt concurrently because Iraq and North Korea are not allies. They point out that in the past four decades, the United States has fought three regional wars, and they have always occurred one at a time. But this criticism misses the point: DoD embraces a two-MTW strategy not because it expects these two adversaries to coordinate their attack plans, but because it does not want to create a weak deterrent in one theater while a major war is being fought in another.

Figure 2.6 shows why DoD is confident about the force balance in both Korea and the Persian Gulf. This figure compares the threats likely to be encountered to the U.S. and allied forces that are planned for the defense effort. The y axis combines ground, air, and naval forces, and takes only quantity into account, not quality. It is based on the assumption that three fighter wings and one CVBG roughly equal a single ground division in overall combat power. The figure shows that once U.S. forces are fully deployed in Korea, the quantitative balance is about 1:1. In the Persian Gulf, the combination of friendly Arab forces, U.S. forces, and European contributions brings the quantitative balance close to 1:1.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>For more data, see International Institute for Strategic Studies (1997).

RAND MR956-2.6

- U.S./allied forces are sufficient for today's 2 concurrent MRCs
  - Potential deficiencies are in strategic mobility and CS/CSS
- Gulf defense vulnerable to surprise attack owing to small U.S. and allied peacetime presence

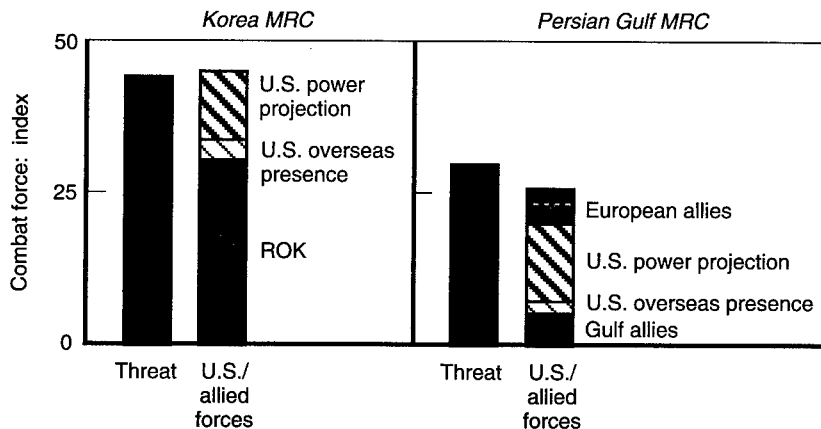


Figure 2.6—MTW Force Balance in Korea and Persian Gulf

Quantity, however, is not the only factor in the military equation. Quality must also be taken into account. In general, U.S. forces are qualitatively superior to adversary forces as a result of their higher readiness, better modernization, and better capacity to carry out joint operations. An especially important factor is the decisive role that airpower can often play in combat operations. During the past 20 years, Western air forces have greatly strengthened their ability to perform missions that can heavily influence ground combat, for example, through strategic bombardment, deep strike, battlefield interdiction, and close air support missions. This improvement is due mostly to the development of better C4I, avionics, and smart munitions. As the Gulf war showed, U.S. air forces (and, to a lesser extent, allied forces) are now capable of inflicting massive damage on enemy ground forces if given the time and opportunity to perform at their fullest capacity. By contrast, adversary air forces remain mostly tailored for air defense operations, not ground attack, and have a dubious capacity to protect their own airspace from U.S. air forces. Thus, the operational equation is more balanced.



Table 2.2 shows in greater detail the land and air balances for both theaters in quantitative terms. In Korea, U.S. and South Korean forces are somewhat outnumbered on the ground, but in the air, U.S. reinforcements give them a quantitative edge of 3:1 and a greater lead in qualitative terms. In the Persian Gulf, U.S. and allied forces could be outnumbered by 2:1 on the ground, but they would enjoy the lead in airpower by 5:1 or more. The primary contributor to airpower is the United States, which provides about 75 percent of the total airpower. In both theaters, enemy air forces are neither modern nor ready, whereas U.S. and allied forces are modern and well-trained. Accordingly, Western plans call for an initial joint effort to block enemy advances, accompanied by a devastating air offensive aimed at destroying enemy armored columns, other forces, and logistic support. Presumably, this campaign would be followed by a joint air-ground counteroffensive aimed at destroying remaining enemy forces, ejecting them from friendly territory, and pursuing other objectives dictated by political circumstances. The conclusion is that if U.S. air forces are given the time and opportunity to operate to their fullest advantage, they can have a decisive impact on both MTWs.

Other considerations slightly dim this optimistic appraisal, however. One concern is whether allied forces would fight effectively. A second concern is that in either theater, the enemy might gain an operational advantage through adroit tactics or special weapons (such as fuel air explosives in Korea that might suppress South Korea's forward defenses). Another worry is that the U.S. Army might lack sufficient active-duty combat support (CS) and combat

Table 2.2

## The Land and Air Balances in Korea and the Persian Gulf

	Korea		Persian Gulf	
	Threat	U.S./Allied	Threat	U.S./Allied
Division Equivalents	38	32	26	13
Combat Aircraft	510	1,630	330	1,615

NOTES: U.S. air forces provide about 75 percent of airpower total; a big quality edge increases air advantage even further. In a joint operation, ground forces block the enemy and air forces play big role in destroying it—U.S. forces must have time to deploy.

service support (CSS) units, such as medical, maintenance, and supply troops. This shortfall could compel DoD to rely on less-ready reserve units to perform various support functions that are important when sustained operations must be launched. However, worry about this shortfall is lessened by two offsetting factors: (1) Army reserve units tend to perform well in support tasks, and (2) the Army's estimate of support requirements is considered high by many critics. Therefore, although these considerations introduce some risk and uncertainty, they do not undercut DoD's judgment that adequate ground, air, and naval combat formations are available for up to two MTWs.

The capacity of the U.S. military posture to successfully wage two concurrent MTW campaigns (or even one campaign) depends heavily, however, on whether large CONUS-based reinforcements can be quickly rushed to the scene to rebuff short-warning attacks. A short-warning attack intended to catch the United States by surprise likely would be the strategy chosen by both Iraq and North Korea. Both countries have powerful incentives to deny the United States as much response time as possible. Moreover, both are in locations that would allow them to contemplate the endeavor.

In both the Persian Gulf and Korea, the reinforcements from CONUS (and in the case of Korea, the powerful forces of South Korea), not overseas presence, are the primary basis for confidence that both MTWs can be won. Even with prepositioning and large airlift forces, several weeks would be required for CONUS forces to arrive. This is especially the case for armored and mechanized ground forces, which must be moved mostly by sealift. In the interim, U.S. overseas-presence forces, allied forces, and early arriving U.S. forces would be required to defend effectively. The question is, Could they do so?

Of the two contingencies, the risks are lower in Korea because the South Korea Army of 25 divisions is large, well-equipped, and deeply entrenched on rugged terrain in the forward areas. Moreover, the combination of U.S. forces in Korea and Japan provides 1.3 divisions, 3.4 fighter wings, and a CVBG—a high-leverage contribution to the defense posture. The early reinforcement need in Korea is for U.S. tactical air forces from CONUS, which can deploy quickly. As a result, nearly 80 percent of the forces intended for a Korea MTW are either deployed there in peacetime or are available within a few days.

In the Persian Gulf, the risks are higher because allied forces are badly outnumbered by the potential threat and quickly available U.S. forces are smaller than in Asia. Only about 25 percent of the total posture for Gulf defense is either deployed there in peacetime or available within a few days. U.S. and allied commanders therefore could be hard-pressed to launch an effective defense with these assets, either to form a strong ground posture or to launch a devastating air campaign. If a surprise attack were launched against Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the outcome could hinge on the prompt deployment of specialized U.S. capabilities, including C4I assets, air defense systems, special operations forces, and lightly equipped ground units for securing key bases and reception facilities. The deployment of air forces and deep-strike assets capable of destroying enemy tank columns could also matter a great deal. These deep-strike assets include the Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS), USAF/USN strike aircraft with long-range missiles, the Multiple Launch Rocket System and the Army Tactical Missile System, and such smart munitions as Skeet and Brilliant Anti-Tank munitions.

If a new Persian Gulf war erupts, it could take the form of a high-stakes race between the two contestants. Iraqi forces would have to drive a distance of 500–1,000 km southward to seize oil fields, bases, and other facilities before large U.S. forces could converge on the scene. Early arriving U.S. forces would face the task of deploying very quickly and using lethal firepower to bombard enemy troop columns in the hope of inflicting enough damage to halt their advance. This initial defense effort would be anchored heavily in deep-strike operations conducted by air and missile forces. The ongoing development of new deep-strike systems (early forerunners of RMA) makes a successful initial defense effort possible.

Figure 2.7 illustrates the results of dynamic computer simulations of this contingency, circa 2005. The x-axis shows the day on which U.S. forces begin deploying to the Gulf (C-Day) in relation to D-Day. The y-axis shows the effectiveness of U.S. deep-strike operations. The data indicate zones of successful, unsuccessful, and uncertain defense efforts. The analysis assumes varying effectiveness of enemy attempts to oppose the entry of U.S. forces and to suppress U.S. air bases. The figure suggests that a successful defense effort is possible

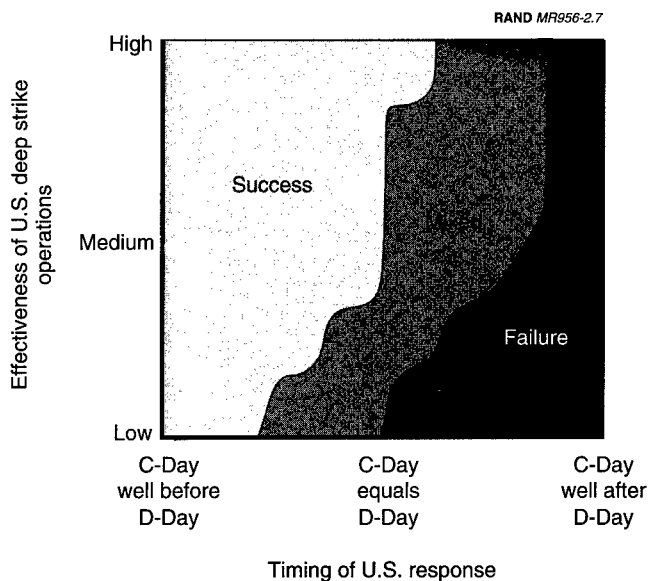


Figure 2.7—Contingency Outcomes in the Persian Gulf

if U.S. forces begin deploying early and conduct effective deep-strike missions. The combination of a delayed deployment and ineffective deep strikes, however, could make the act of defeating enemy forces and ejecting them from friendly territory longer and more costly than was the case for the 1991 war.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, the current U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf might not be fully adequate if enemy forces develop the capacity to launch an effective surprise attack and to oppose the entry of U.S. reinforcements. The current small presence therefore merits careful attention in U.S. defense planning and programming. The Gulf War of 1991 ended in the U.S.-led coalition's victory partly because Iraqi forces halted at the Saudi border, thereby giving U.S. and allied forces ample time to deploy. The next Gulf War might not be so accommodating. Recognizing this vulnerability, current U.S. defense plans focus on speedily deploying the special capabilities and deep-strike

<sup>4</sup>For more analysis, see Davis, Hillestad, and Crawford (1997), pp. 141–178.

assets needed to blunt a surprise attack. U.S. defense strategy in the Persian Gulf therefore depends primarily on power projection from CONUS, not overseas presence. The issue of whether more U.S. forces should be stationed in the Persian Gulf if the security situation worsens could become an important item on the overseas-presence agenda in the coming years.

Another important factor in assessing the adequacy of U.S. forces is whether planning for MTWs and even bigger conflicts should be limited to the Persian Gulf and Korea. The following are some unlikely but plausible contingencies:

- Conflict with Russia in the Commonwealth of Independent States in the CEE region
- Defense of Turkey and nearby interests against an adversary coalition
- Defense of the Mediterranean and North Africa against an Islamic coalition
- Defense of the Persian Gulf against an adversary coalition armed with WMD
- Defense of a unified Korea against a well-armed China
- Defense of East Asian and Western Pacific sea lanes against a well-armed China.

These hypothetical events would require not only a major and unexpected downturn of political relations, but also faster improvements than now seem likely in the military forces of potential adversaries. Nonetheless, conflicts could include trouble in Eastern Europe with Russia, a confrontation with China over control of the Asian and Pacific sea lanes, or Middle East and Gulf conflicts whose origin is broader than control of the Gulf oil fields. If these new contingencies must be addressed in the near term, they will call for a U.S. posture that can adapt to meet them. U.S. overseas forces would need develop the capability to project beyond their current bases and defense perimeters.

## SUMMARY

Taking into account political-strategic and military criteria, the current U.S. overseas posture presents a mixed picture. In Europe, the

U.S. presence is quite strong, and Western interests there are being adequately safeguarded. In Asia, U.S. forces are strong where the greatest immediate danger lies, in Korea and Northeast Asia. In the Persian Gulf, the U.S. military presence is larger today than in earlier years, but the region is unstable and the future may see a growing vulnerability to surprise attack. This three-theater posture, with its assets and liabilities, provides a foundation for building the U.S. overseas presence of the future. The question then is, Where should this posture be headed, and how should it be steered?

---

**THE IMPACT OF FUTURE INTERNATIONAL  
CONDITIONS ON THE U.S. OVERSEAS PRESENCE**

---

The future U.S. overseas posture will reflect the global strategic situation that emerges in the coming decade and beyond. The United States will want to use its overseas presence to help shape the future international system, so that it can mold it to favor U.S. interests. This chapter's assessment identifies powerful reasons for believing that major changes may lie ahead.

**TOWARD A FUTURE OF DYNAMIC CHANGE AND  
UNCERTAINTY**

Although the Cold War was a dangerous era, forging U.S. policy for it was rendered easier because the international system was so static. The core of the system's foundation—a bipolar structure anchored in a global standoff between the U.S.-led Western alliance and the Soviet-led communist bloc—remained remarkably constant from the Cold War's onset in 1947 until its end in 1989. Seldom before has the world seen such a mixture of nerve-wracking tension yet great continuity. U.S. defense planning profited from this stasis and came to value it. In this setting, defense planners could focus their attention on fine-tuning a strategy and posture that were not constantly being uprooted by the need to respond to a changing external environment.

This prolonged era of continuity came to an abrupt end in 1989–1991, when the world suddenly turned upside down in ways reminiscent of the early 20th century. Stasis similar to that of the Cold War is unlikely to reappear again anytime soon. Indeed, perpetual change might be the future's dominant theme. The international system

might alter its character several times in the coming 10 to 20 years. As a result, static projections and single-point estimates will no longer provide a suitable paradigm for designing the future U.S. national security strategy and defense posture.

The likelihood of great, continuing change in world affairs is due to the expectation that the individual building blocks of the international system all seem destined for major upheavals. For example, political values are changing in response to the discrediting of communism and to the emerging tug-of-war among democracy, nationalism, ethnicity, and Islamic theocracy. The global security system is changing as bipolarity gives way to a new but murky multipolarity in all three regions. Old powers are fading, but new ones are rising. A new, fluid geopolitics may be emerging that changes how the big powers, the medium powers, and the small powers relate to each other. The world economy is also changing in response to new technologies and market dynamics, but its destination is very unclear because prosperity is likely to be distributed unevenly. Military affairs are changing in response to new technologies, doctrines, and force structures. Global communications are changing in ways that allow for the instantaneous dissemination of information almost everywhere. Underlying these trends are even more fundamental changes. The nation-state is changing: Its authority appears to be eroding and transnational dynamics are becoming more prevalent. Equally important, society and culture are also changing in both the developed world and the underdeveloped world.

These multiple changes make forecasting the future more difficult. Whereas some scholars predict world peace, others predict global catastrophe or varying points in between. The prospect of many changes interacting in complicated ways means not only that the future likely will be different from now but also that the future seems unpredictable. A simple axiom guides predictability in the international arena: the greater the degree of change ahead, the greater the uncertainty about the outcome. Therefore, because the changes may be large, the uncertainty is equally large.

Indeed, the future may be not only unknown, but also unknowable. That is, building a formal model that accurately judges the causal relationships of future world affairs may be beyond the capacity of social science and mathematics. Even if a such a model could be built, it might not be able to generate accurate single-point forecasts



because the future may be greatly affected by chance variations as well as by deterministic mechanisms.

U.S. officials will no longer be able to use the current international situation as a reliable guide for anticipating the future. Because of the possibility of great change, they will not be able to assume that today's strategic conditions will exist some years from now. Instead, the United States may continually have to review its overseas presence and the strategy it supports and to adjust it to unfolding events, thereby bringing about regular and greater changes than those being experienced today.

#### **THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF COMPLEXITY THEORY TO UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL CHANGE**

If the international future will be filled with change and uncertainty, how can long-range planning for overseas presence best consider the strategic conditions ahead? The best stance is to think about the future as well as possible and to be prepared to act in ways that influence how it unfolds. "Complexity theory" offers an intellectual construct for thinking and acting in such ways.

Complexity theory was originally created by physicists and economists, but it seems suited for analyzing the coming era of international affairs. This theory tries to explain the behavior of complex dynamic systems that spontaneously organize themselves through internal adaptation and growth, while never losing their capacity for perpetual change and novelty. A flock of birds is one example; the weather, a second; some aspects of human societies, a third. These systems are neither static nor chaotic. Driven most often by their own unconscious rules, they use dynamic change as an "engine" to propel their growth and survival. Thus, they give rise to much of the organized creativity that takes place when a large number of agents begin interacting in ways that are not guided by some central authority. While undergoing continuing change, these systems create order out of chaos through emergent behavior, nonlinear mechanisms, and hierarchical structures that survive because they serve functional purposes.<sup>1</sup> Complexity theory addresses how these

---

<sup>1</sup>See Alberts and Czerewinski (1997). See also Waldrop (1992).

systems form, how they contribute to nature and human society, and how “actors” within them can cope with their dynamics.

Complexity theory is relevant to the study of world affairs because the international arena has many of the hallmarks of a complex adaptive system. The international arena, after all, is a giant political-economic “system” composed of many actors (nation-states and others), and it is influenced by many variables, structures, and processes. Moreover, the international system’s core dynamics are seldom the product of a single country. Instead, they normally are the unconscious, and often-unintended, by-product of many countries interacting together, all applying power to achieve their purposes. In essence, the international system has a life of its own. It organizes itself spontaneously, it adapts itself to new conditions and pressures, and it rises or falls on the basis of how well it functions. History, moreover, supports the theory of complex adaptive systems at work. During each historical era, a distinct type of international system has emerged, each with properties of its own. Especially in their early years, these systems normally have been quite dynamic. Stasis has occurred only later, and it often has heralded a system’s old age and impending death. The fact that many international systems brought conflict and war does not alter the conclusion that they truly were “systems.” After all, a system does not have to produce healthy consequences for it to be a system; indeed, pathology can be a system’s central outcome.

Complexity theory is by no means the only construct for understanding international affairs. Scholars of international politics and economics have produced a variety of alternative theories for understanding their subject. Most of their theories offer a microscope for analyzing specific features of international life, such as power politics, institution building, and economics and trade. What complexity theory offers is a telescope, or a general framework for analyzing the tension between stasis and change as a new international system is born, grows to maturity, and passes through adulthood. Equally important, it calls attention to the processes by which key structures are formed and to the influence these structures have in guiding the system’s growth and performance. Complexity theory is useful to policy analysis because it casts a bright spotlight on two critical issues that must be understood if effective U.S. strategic responses are to be launched: the phenomenon of accelerating international

change and the process by which new patterns of order are being established.

Figure 3.1 applies complexity theory to a spectrum of international systems. On the spectrum's left, complexity theory portrays a system that is static to the point of rigidity: Locked into equilibrium, it does not change at all—at least until some exogenous event disrupts it. The Cold War's bipolar system falls into this category. At the spectrum's right end is a system that is turbulent to the point of chaos. That is, it is changing fast, but its changes are not producing greater structure and order. To the contrary, its changes are mostly random, and they are producing infinite variations with no enduring patterns and consistencies. In the spectrum's middle, complexity theory displays its chief focus: a system that is hovering at the "outer edge of chaos." This is the point where, according to complexity theory, dynamic change is still fast paced, but this change gives rise to growing structure and order through the mechanisms of spontaneous self-organization and adaptation. This is the point at which creation takes place, as new systems coalesce, gather strength and energy, and—for good or ill—begin enlarging into sophisticated and powerful structures. These structures either survive for long periods or eventually collapse because they prove to be dysfunctional or incapable of dealing with new challenges.

Why should something as seemingly abstract as "complexity theory" be used to help guide U.S. strategic thinking on national security policy and overseas presence? Why not focus instead on the individual problems and opportunities that seem likely to arise, issue by issue and region by region? The whole of international affairs must

RAND MR956-3.1

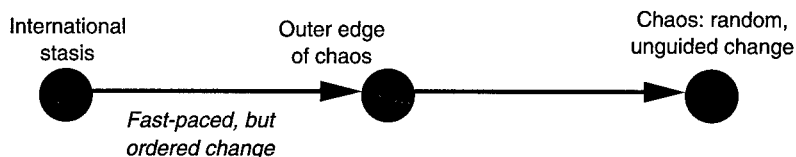


Figure 3.1—Insights from Complexity Theory

be seen if its parts are to be understood. For example, an individual country might not be motivated to acquire WMD to accomplish its own immediate policies. But it might become motivated to do so if it senses danger—or opportunity—from its surrounding region. If it acquires weapons, that act by itself might not be profoundly destabilizing to neighboring countries, assuming it does not intend to use them. But great instability can be the consequence if that act not only inspires neighboring countries to cross the WMD threshold but also sets a precedent for similar proliferation in many other regions. This example illustrates how international affairs are a product of many actions, reactions, and interactions—all of which must be understood if sound policy is to be developed.

Like any good systems theory, complexity theory endeavors to be comprehensive. It can help identify how separate developments are interconnected and how individual events can have secondary consequences and powerful spin-off effects. It can help draw attention to how individual dangers in one region can—if left unattended—produce anticipated, accelerating dangers in other regions. It can also help illuminate how local positive developments can have a cumulative, intensifying impact elsewhere. It is attuned to the complicated interplay of many factors and to how the dynamics of this interplay can produce surprising patterns. It thus can help produce comprehensive awareness and strategic vision—key ingredients if individual policies are to be joined together to form a grand strategy. Thus, complexity theory is becoming a useful instrument for strategic planning because the world has become a complex place.

A good example of a system at the outer edge of chaos is a dynamic capitalist economy that is poor and unorganized at the beginning but steadily becomes larger and wealthier, even though no central authority or plan is directing it. What directs it and causes its growth are market mechanisms: the unconscious interaction of supply and demand that produces dynamic change and steady growth. This growth, however, is not necessarily destined to unfold along a single, predetermined path. It can give rise to several different types of modern capitalist economies, including monopolies, oligopolies, or highly competitive economies composed of many equally large firms. Nor is eternal progress toward economic “nirvana” the only possible path. Indeed, an economy might organize itself on the basis of pathological and ultimately self-defeating principles. It might

survive and grow for a period, but if it does not reform, it eventually will collapse as a result of its dysfunctional behavior.

One hallmark of complexity is that, compared to the Cold War, the United States must now deal with a larger number of nations that have wide scope for independent action. During the Cold War, the United States was able to feel that if it could influence the behavior of a single country, the USSR, it could greatly dampen the potential for instability in many regions. Such simplicity is no longer the case. Many countries can now produce instability. Most of them must be approached individually because influencing one of them is no guarantee that the others will be affected. In addition, military deterrence is no longer the primary mechanism for exerting influence, other mechanisms must also be employed, of a political and economic nature. Beyond this, the international security structure is no longer the primary determinant of how the world economy flows. The world economy now is driven by broader dynamics, and indeed, it is becoming a key determinant of how the future security structure will take shape. For these reasons and more, a complex world is hard to deal with—even for a superpower.

Complexity theory offers potent insights about how the United States can think about handling future international affairs—and the role that it assigns to its overseas military presence. Complexity theory proclaims that the United States should not expect stasis in the coming era. Especially when an old system has collapsed and many variables are set free to act on their own, complexity theory asserts, dynamic change and turbulence are the norm. Equally important, complexity theory does not advocate fear of change; instead it asserts that even if stasis is a feasible outcome, it is not necessarily to be preferred as a policy goal. Although stasis can bring stability in the short term, it also stifles progress, which can bring instability over the long haul. Dynamic change, complexity theory points out, may bring about discomforting turbulence, but it is also the best path toward true growth and progress. Just as important, complexity theory asserts that change is not necessarily a recipe for chaos and catastrophe. Instead, change can stop short of chaos; it can locate itself at the point where new structures, processes, and organizations can take shape. As a result, complexity theory suggests that, although future international change is not inevitable, it should be welcomed if it can be channeled in the right directions.

Channeling change in the right direction, however, is not something to be taken for granted. As Figure 3.2 points out, new international systems can operate in two very different fashions. One type of new system, displayed in the upper part of Figure 3.2, can be highly functional and enduring. It can spawn peace, cooperation, and integration. Its opposite is an international system that has an equally complex and sophisticated structure but operates in dysfunctional and even pathological ways. Normally, it will descend into conflict and war. A good example is Europe's balance-of-power system before World War I. Both types of systems, complexity theory hypothesizes, are possible outcomes of change. The former may be preferred, but as history shows, the latter often has a way of gaining the upper hand.

Complexity theory thus suggests that during the coming era, U.S. officials should abandon any search for a new stasis in favor of trying to understand how dynamic change is taking place and how it can be constructively influenced. Complexity theory projects a future of great changes in all three regions, and it counsels U.S. officials to expect major differences among these regions as well as regular fluctuations within each of them. It rejects deterministic forecasts that either permanent peace or perpetual conflict are inevitable. Instead, it regards the future as conditional, depending on the specific structures that evolve. Complexity theory therefore calls on U.S. officials to pay careful attention to those new structures—formal institutions and informal patterns of relationships—that will spontaneously be taking shape in the coming years. These structures will play a major role in creating the kind of international system that will dominate the future. They have the potential to produce stability and integration, but they also have the potential to produce something less desirable. As a result, they should be watched closely and shaped with their strategic impact in mind.

A key insight of complexity theory is that the outcome of changes can be shaped, provided strong efforts are made on behalf of a healthy outcome. Similarly, a chess player, who cannot hope to control the game in every detail, can adopt a strategy aimed at influencing the game to flow in successful directions. Although complexity theory rejects the idea that the international future can be controlled, it calls for strong U.S. policy actions aimed at shaping and gradually gaining

RAND MR956-3.2

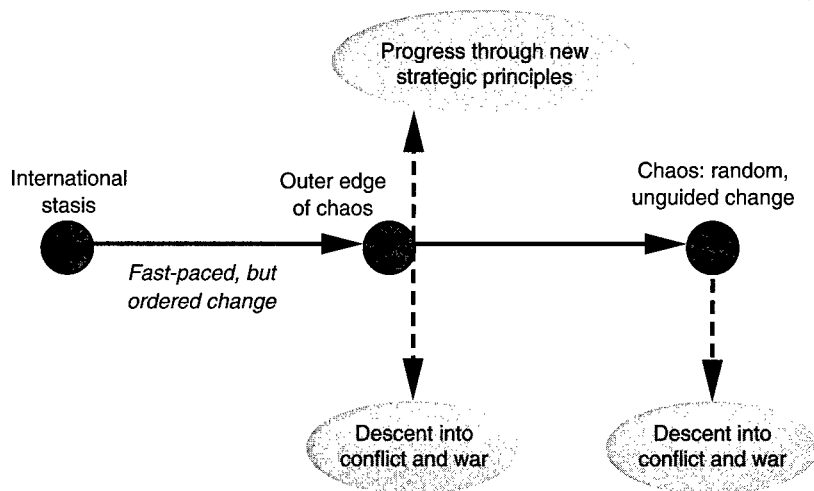


Figure 3.2—Alternative International Outcomes

influence over the future environment. This is the best way to help ensure that when the new system emerges, it will be healthy, not pathological.

How does complexity theory apply to U.S. overseas military presence? Complexity theory encourages a comprehensive vision that looks beyond individual countries, issues, and regions. It calls for a “far-sighted” U.S. policy that aspires to influence how the international system as a whole is evolving—that is, how nations are interacting on the basis of structures and processes that may be evolving unintentionally—so that it can shape each country’s agenda and its ultimate fate.

Complexity theory implies that although overseas presence should retain the mission of being prepared for war, its broader purpose should be to help shape the course of larger international political and economic trends. Moreover, complexity theory reasons that U.S. forces stationed overseas should be used to encourage stability by dampening conflicts, but not to preserve stasis and block change. Instead, their purpose should be (to the extent possible) to help guide constructive change, including the steady enlargement of the

Western community and the creation of cooperative relations among key countries. Complexity theory thus concludes that the U.S. overseas presence may have to change as well, because a new military structure is often the best way to pursue new goals by carrying out new missions.

### PREVENTING DESCENTS TO PERMIT PROGRESS

Regardless of whether complexity theory is accepted, its central judgment seems likely to prevail: Today's international system is not only changing rapidly but is also poised precariously at a critical crossroads. Depending on the path taken, it is capable of moving in healthy or pathological directions. The future thus can produce either a steady march toward peaceful integration and other forms of progress and prosperity, or a sharp descent into mounting conflict and war, or something in between. Most international-relations scholars agree with this basic conclusion, even though they embrace different theories and explanations. The fact that so many different perspectives lead to the same conclusion makes the judgment all the more credible.<sup>2</sup> In the coming years, a central task of U.S. national security strategy, and the U.S. overseas military presence, will therefore be to help shape and control the dangerous features of the coming era so that steady progress toward minimizing these features will become possible.

A good example of these dual tasks is NATO's enlargement into the CEE region. NATO is enlarging partly to promote capitalist democracy and integration in this region. Yet a second, equally important purpose is to help prevent this region from sliding into geopolitical instability in the form of internecine rivalry among the countries there, vulnerability to Russian pressure, and a potential Russian-German clash over control of the region's security alignments. NATO's visions for promoting something good are thus reinforced by its prudent desire to prevent something bad. NATO enlargement is a vehicle for achieving both purposes. What applies to Europe and NATO likely will apply, to some degree, to other regions as well. Because the goals of promoting the good and preventing the bad

<sup>2</sup>For a good analysis of global strategic trends, see Brzezinski (1997). The debate between optimists and pessimists is covered in Kugler (1995).



reinforce each other, they will need to be seen as two sides of the same coin.

How much emphasis should be accorded each side of this strategic coin? And how great is the risk that, instead of merely presenting isolated dangers at specific locations, the future system will become dangerous at its core in ways that spawn interactive troubles in many places? Although most scholars agree that the giddy optimism of 1991–1992 was misplaced, they offer differing answers to these questions. Whereas some are cautiously optimistic, others are quite worried. Because no consensus exists, these questions are best answered by looking at the future in terms of three scenarios that predict differing degrees of progress and danger:

- **Optimistic:** Greater stability than today
  - Europe integrated
  - Persian Gulf similar to today
  - Asia more stable, with Korea unified and China cooperative
- **Middle Ground:** Greater complexity, similar danger
  - Europe stable with local tensions and uncertain dynamics
  - Persian Gulf endangered by proliferation
  - Korea resolved, but Asia menaced by a statist and geopolitical China
- **Pessimistic:** Greater instability and danger than today
  - Europe faces a new cold war with Russia
  - Persian Gulf volatile because of proliferation and unstable politics
  - Asia highly unstable because of an imperial and militaristic China.

Because each of these scenarios is plausible, the implications for U.S. policy can be assessed by attaching probability estimates to them and discerning their effect on U.S. priorities.

U.S. priorities will vary as a function of how seriously each of these scenarios is taken. For example, suppose that Scenario 1 is given a high chance of unfolding, Scenario 2 is given a medium chance, and Scenario 3 is given only a low chance. U.S. policy could then relax its

guard against big dangers because it could largely afford to ignore Scenario 3. The task would then be to guide Scenario 1 to fulfillment through integration and community building, while working at the margins to deflate Scenario 2. U.S. requirements for overseas presence might be lower than they are now; U.S. forces abroad would be performing different missions than now. Missions in all three theaters would take the form of today's activities in Europe.

However, an entirely different policy conclusion arises if these scenarios are given equal probability. The likelihood of Scenario 3's deep descent then increases to one-third. The combined probability of Scenarios 2 and 3—a world of equal or greater danger than today—is then fully two-thirds. The implication is that the United States can hardly afford to relax its policy. Indeed, it should be galvanized by alarm and worry and should be prepared for very hard work on behalf of a difficult cause. The implications for the U.S. overseas presence are equally obvious, because its burdens are going to be heavy. Requirements for U.S. forces abroad might grow. At the very least, these forces would acquire a different portfolio of missions aimed at preventing and managing big troubles. Their activities in Europe and Asia might come to resemble their current activities in the Persian Gulf.

This study concludes that Scenario 2 is the most probable outcome, with about a better-than-even chance of occurring. It regards each of the other scenarios as having a low to medium probability. If that is the case, the United States is best advised to focus on preparing for a more complex world—with dangers that are similar in degree but perhaps different in nature from those of today. Therefore, although the United States should regard Scenario 1 as a feasible goal, it should also consider a steep descent as likely enough to be worried about and safeguarded against. If this perspective is adopted to guide planning, it translates into an overseas presence that may be similar in size to today's but performs new missions aimed at handling the emerging situation, encouraging opportunities for further peace building, and working hard to prevent new dangers from growing.

Rather than becoming unwisely preoccupied with the probabilities of any of these scenarios, the United States should determine how it can best deal with all of them, because it is likely to confront elements of all three in the coming years. During this period, the

United States likely will confront a great deal of dynamism abroad, as well as shifting challenges and changing fortunes in all three theaters. At one juncture, it may find Europe on the way to a rosy outcome, the Persian Gulf in deep trouble, and Asia suspended somewhere in between. A short time later, it might find the tables turned, with Europe and Asia sinking into deep trouble, and the Persian Gulf moving toward tranquillity. Still later, an entirely new situation might appear. Rapid changes like these are typical of a complex world. What the United States will therefore require is not commitment to any single scenario everywhere, but the agility to handle the varying patterns of a complex world in ways that steadily promote good outcomes and prevent bad ones.

The need to act strongly and effectively in performing new missions—to promote stability and prevent conflict—is reinforced by the potpourri of specific dangers being warned about in much of the academic literature. Table 3.1 groups these dangers into three categories. Although this list is not exhaustive, it illustrates the sheer number of potential dangers ahead. Many are only beginning to manifest themselves on the world stage but have the potential to intensify if they are inflamed by evolving strategic conditions. Moreover these three categories are not independent of each other. Dampening dangers in one category can help dampen those in the other two. Conversely, an intensification of dangers in one category can have the effect of intensifying dangers in the other two. Although the United States is unlikely to be confronted by all of these dangers at the same time, it may face many of them—alone or in combination and in varying degrees—as the future evolves.

The importance of these dangers must be judged from a geostrategic perspective. If the United States could disengage from world affairs and again pursue isolationism, it would have the luxury of ignoring many of these dangers. But that is impossible, because the United States has vital interests at stake in the international arena. Moreover, history shows that isolationism is a self-defeating strategy because it allows manageable dangers to mushroom into huge threats.

As an alternative to isolationism, the United States could try to build a wall around the existing Western community of nations, and

**Table 3.1**  
**Potential Political, Economic, and Military Dangers Ahead**

Political	Economic	Military
Multipolarity, nationalism, ethnicity, and anti-Western ideologies	Dynamic world economy produces unequal hierarchy of winners and losers, thus breeding political dissatisfaction and rivalry	Widespread proliferation of WMD occurs
Uncertain relationship with a powerful China and a resentful Russia	Economic agendas lead big powers to develop uncooperative security policies	Conventional weapons proliferate, thereby permitting a shift toward offensive military strategies
Confrontations with a shifting cast of medium powers, small powers, and coalitions	Conflicts erupt over control of markets and resources	Regional imbalances of military power develop, with destabilizing political consequences
Mounting low-level violence in many places	Rogue powers acquire the greater economic wealth needed for militarization and aggression	Big powers start competing in military terms by strengthening forces and seeking regional partners
Increasing communication and interdependence that spawns animosity rather than reconciliation	Combination of poverty and population growth in underdeveloped world produces chronic instability and violence	In one or more regions, medium-sized rogue powers acquire greater military capacity and contemplate aggression
Weakened nation-states and growing importance of cultural bonds that produce intensified political conflict		Local violence is intensified by access to modern weaponry

thereby shield itself and its allies from the dangers ahead. Again, however, this strategy would be self-defeating. Equally important, U.S. and allied interests are enlarging outward beyond this boundary, onto territory where dangers may be brewing. This important development will be discussed in the next chapter.

The multiple political dangers ahead already exist, and if they are not dampened, they could intensify in all three theaters. They reflect his-

torical problems brought back to life by the end of the Cold War, as well as new trends created by the emerging era. They derive from the newly multipolar nature of the international system, the lack of consensus on core values, clashing interests among countries, and underlying trends in culture, society, government, and technology. Whereas today's political dangers primarily take the form of trouble with medium-sized powers (such as Iraq and North Korea), tomorrow's dangers could witness mounting trouble with big powers (for example, Russia and China) and small powers (such as Serbia) that have local, anti-status quo agendas. Equally important, a descent into a dangerous world could witness the emergence of instability-causing coalitions among big, medium, and small powers—thereby greatly increasing the security troubles facing the United States and its allies. Moreover, these agendas could cut across the separate regions, thus unifying them into an integrated global problem. An already existing worry is that China or Russia might develop stronger coalition ties with the Western adversaries in the Persian Gulf. Parallel developments are also possible in the other two theaters.

Although the growing world economy is commonly regarded as an “engine” of integration, closer inspection suggests a more guarded appraisal. After all, economic pursuits have set the stage for political rivalry and military confrontation many times in the past. For example, World War II in Asia had its origins in the struggle to control access to resources and markets in China and Southeast Asia. The largest concern is that the dynamic world economy will not produce a rising tide that lifts all countries, but instead will produce an uneven hierarchy of winners and losers. This development could lead the losers to resort to politics and military force in order to press their grievances. A worrisome prospect is that disruptive coalitions might emerge among big, medium, and small powers, potentially uniting the strong with the weak and tying the three regions together. Emerging economic affairs could then prove to be a big part of the strategic problem facing the United States, not a big part of the solution.

Today the common wisdom is that proliferation of WMD poses the greatest military threat to the United States. This could prove to be the case, yet the dangers posed by the proliferation of conventional weapons also deserve close attention. Modern conventional weapons are becoming so powerful that a small number of them can

provide an aggressor with an impressive array of options against its neighbors. Moreover, new technologies may award the advantage to the side on the offensive, not the defensive. In the past, the attacker normally had to possess a significant numerical edge over the defender, which benefited from prepared positions and other advantages. Modern technology, however, may be eroding these defensive advantages, allowing the attacker to achieve the high lethalties and fast movements needed to prosecute successful campaigns. If new technologies enable the attacker to better master this advantage, at strategic stability will suffer and the number of wars may increase.

These developments are especially manifested in the growing importance of tactical airpower. In the past, aggression typically required a large army. Modern air forces can strike quickly with little warning and few losses to the attacker, and they can reach out to long distances, for example, 200–300 miles without refueling. Although air forces cannot occupy territory, they can use strategic bombardment to inflict enormous damage upon a country's industrial base, society, and government. And if future wars are waged over political and economic agendas, not control of territory, airpower's growing lethality may translate into more wars, not fewer.

In addition, the growing importance of airpower does not mean that ground and naval forces are losing their potency. Even a small, modern ground posture can inflict huge damage on an enemy's territory if it is equipped with heavy weapons, is well-trained, and has mastered the operational art of fast maneuver and coordinated combined-arms campaigns. The same principle applies to a small flotilla of modern naval craft. And as ground and naval forces acquire modern cruise missiles that are capable of deep, accurate strikes, they will become even more powerful. For example, a small naval force equipped with cruise missiles could pose a much greater threat to critical SLOCs than is the case today. The implication is that in the years ahead, even small countries may be able to assemble modest-sized forces of air, ground, and naval elements that together provide much greater strategic and military power than they do today. This especially will be possible for countries that possess the wealth to buy more weapons. As the world economy grows, the number of countries falling into this category will increase.

The strategic significance of growing conventional military strength will be determined by the manner in which regional military bal-

ances are affected at key “flash points.” The Persian Gulf is one flash point, the East Asia Sea and the South China Sea may be others. There will be other flash points as well, perhaps including Europe and its periphery. If imbalances emerge that lead rogue powers to acquire conventional weapons superiority, growing instability could be the consequence. The greatest worry is that rogue powers might acquire both WMD and conventional weapons superiority. The challenge facing U.S. military power and U.S. overseas presence will be to help preserve regional balances so that the likelihood of conflict and war is reduced.

Today, the United States faces a moderate level of danger, and therefore confronts limited uncertainties and variations in its main defense plans. But if the world becomes more dangerous, the United States would be compelled to handle a wider spectrum of security challenges and to face a wider set of uncertainties about how contingencies could occur. In the extreme case, a dangerous world of interacting political, economic, and military trends could overpower the United States—not only its economic and military resources, but also its political and intellectual capacity to handle a security agenda so large and diverse.

How can the United States best handle these dangers, and what are the implications for the U.S. overseas presence as it goes about performing future peacetime missions? As Figure 3.3 suggests, the answer may not lie in mechanically applying the “aggressor-deterrence model,” which perceives aggression as the problem and deterrence as the solution, that animated U.S. planning during the Cold War and is still widely used today. Although this model may still apply at some locations (such as the Persian Gulf) in the future, if today’s threats of imminent regional wars fade, it probably will not serve as an all-purpose strategic model for handling the future.

By contrast, the “geopolitical-stability model” may provide a better assessment of the core problems ahead and the corrective measures for handling them. This model is a logical outgrowth of how complexity theory—and similar dynamic theories of international politics—portray danger in the coming era. It does not assume that the central strategic challenge is solely or even primarily to deter aggressive rogues. Instead, it determines that the challenge will be to prevent systemic geopolitical competition and instability. This model

RAND MR956-3.3

Aggressor Model	Geopolitical Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing rogue state perceives lack of deterrence</li> <li>Builds up military forces</li> <li>Attacks weak neighbors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of stabilizing mechanisms—collective defense and balance of power—leads several nations to develop statist agendas and renationalized security policies</li> <li>Political rivalries and military competition develop; imbalances worsen; offensive strategies are adopted</li> <li>Some status-quo states become rogue powers; others are led by fear to take provocative actions</li> <li>Polarization occurs; coalitions form; tensions mount; spark lights fire—1914</li> </ul>
Corrective measures:	Corrective measures:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raw deterrence and decisive response</li> <li>Focus on symptoms, diseases, and cures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic management, peacetime engagement, military balance, regional security architecture</li> <li>Focus on underlying causes and preventive medicine</li> </ul>

Figure 3.3—How Does Instability Occur?

postulates that a lack of stabilizing mechanisms—including collective defense and regional balances of power—can trigger an action-reaction cycle leading to growing security troubles in each region. Geopolitical instability can begin spreading when the absence of stabilizing mechanisms encourages some countries to pursue statist policies and increased military power. This development, in turn, can result in mushrooming political rivalries, military competition, power imbalances, and offensive strategies by the strong against the weak. Some countries could thus become rogue powers and others led by fear to take provocative actions of their own. The stage would thereby be set for a steep descent into instability and ultimately war.<sup>3</sup>

The classical example of competitive, destabilizing geopolitics at work is Europe in the years leading up to World War I. The pathological dynamics of the European security system during that period left all countries with offensive military strategies and spawned two nervous alliances poised to spring at each others' throats. The

<sup>3</sup>For a national analysis that develops a version of this model, see Kissinger (1994).



unwanted but predictable result was a rush to catastrophe when a minor crisis occurred in 1914. Thus, World War I was not a product of systematic aggression as was World War II. Ironically, the security system of 1914 was itself a principal culprit.

Asia seems a potential site for the dynamics of geopolitical instability to unfold if care is not taken. For example, a premature U.S. decision to withdraw its military forces after Korean unification has been achieved could be the impetus for China to seek domination of the Asian security system. China's pursuit of an aggressive foreign policy backed by a buildup of military power could then lead a fearful Japan, which no longer trusted its security connection to the United States, to rearm and project its power outward to safeguard its vital sea lanes. The long-feared reassertion of Japanese power, in turn, could touch off a competitive dynamic of arming and coalition building across Asia and the Pacific. The outcome of this dynamic could be an accelerating confrontation of the sort that plunged Asia into a cruel sequence of wars a century ago.

Because the geopolitical-stability model perceives that different core problems are at work than does the aggressor-deterrence model, it calls for a different set of corrective measures and U.S. overseas-presence missions. Rather than erecting a deterrence and defense regime against predetermined enemies, this model calls for a more subtle use of power aimed at administering "preventive medicine" to remedy the underlying causes of impending geopolitical trouble. It therefore calls for U.S. defense policies aimed at assertive peacetime security management: strong alliances, security commitments to vulnerable countries, a regional balance of power, partnerships with old adversaries, diplomatic engagement of potential new adversaries, and the building of stable regional security architectures. This model further specifies that the exact mix of these instruments should depend on the situation being encountered. If the task is to stabilize a region in mild ways, partnership relations and engagement may be appropriate. If a stronger form of stabilization is needed, stronger measures, including alliances, security commitments, and the demonstration of raw military power, may be required. Whereas an example of the first category is NATO's PFP program, an example of the second category is the U.S. decision in 1996 to send two carriers to the East China Sea when Taiwan was being menaced by China.

The future will probably call for a combination of these two models, used in flexible and shifting ways. In today's world, U.S. defense planning is still heavily characterized by the aggressor-deterrent model, especially in the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia. Only in Europe is a major switch to the geopolitical-stability model fully under way. To the extent that enemies and threats of war fade but enduring stability does not evolve in the aftermath, tomorrow's world could witness further steps toward embracing this model as a central rationale for U.S. policy, at least in Europe and Asia. The primary purpose of the U.S. overseas presence will then become peacetime environment shaping and stability, as well as preserving a backup capability to deter aggression and to wage wars at a moment's notice.

However, even with the growing importance of peacetime missions, the prospect of new international conditions means that U.S. defense planning may need to prepare for a broader spectrum of crises and wartime contingencies than is the case today. Although today's official formulation holds that the two-MTW strategy is intended to cover a broad class of potential wars, only Korea and the Persian Gulf are regarded as serious near-term candidates for actual conflicts of this magnitude. Many new conflicts in different places than today can be imagined.

The issue of future peacetime and wartime missions in each theater is addressed in more detail later in this report. Suffice it here to say that planning for the future U.S. overseas presence seems likely to be saddled with striking a balance among peacetime and wartime missions, perhaps under conditions in which the immediate threat of war is a less compelling concern than today. At least in Europe and Asia, a muted form of geopolitical dynamism that undercuts the validity of threat-based planning is likely. But a strong U.S. military presence whose primary purpose is to carry out new, demanding peacetime missions will still be needed.

## SUMMARY

The main message of this chapter is that major international changes may lie ahead that have important consequences for U.S. overseas military presence. The principal danger may not be the appearance of new enemies, but instead a steep descent into an unstable, mod-

ern-era geopolitics that threatens to entangle many countries in its competitive dynamics. These and other dangers will probably have to be guarded against if continued progress toward peace and integration is to be achieved.

To the extent that this forecast of future international change proves accurate, U.S. strategic planning for overseas presence will need to shift gears. Static defense planning on the basis of a limited set of threats and canonical scenarios will need to give way to a more complex, more dynamic form of planning focused on broader objectives and different missions. The United States will need to work hard at shaping the peacetime international environment to promote healthy trends and prevent damaging ones. It will also need to prepare for a different set of crises and wars than those being considered today. The following chapter explores the issue of how a new strategic planning framework can be crafted for dealing with these new international conditions.

---

## NEW PURPOSES AND GEOGRAPHY FOR U.S. OVERSEAS PRESENCE

---

If the future challenge will be to stabilize a fluid international system that is laden with both opportunities and dangers, what strategic agenda should the U.S. overseas presence reflect? How will preparing to carry out this agenda affect the U.S. forces that should be deployed overseas in the coming years? The analysis begins by developing a new strategic planning framework for determining the future U.S. overseas presence. The framework further develops the departures launched by the new U.S. national security policy and defense strategy initiated in the QDR. It is based on strategic objectives and missions, not solely threats. The analysis then develops a design concept for configuring the future U.S. overseas presence to carry out these new objectives and missions in new places. Next, it applies this framework and design concept to each of the three key regions: Europe, the Persian Gulf, and Asia. Finally, it suggests how the United States can help improve the forces of allies and coalition partners so that they can project power to assist U.S. forces.

The thesis developed in this chapter has far-reaching implications because of the changes it forecasts. It maintains that the United States should start developing a new overseas presence that is guided by different purposes and geography than those of today.

A new and larger "operating perimeter" for U.S. overseas forces may lie ahead. This term, as used here, needs to be defined. It does not necessarily refer to a location where U.S. forces confront an adversary and a military threat or single out a likely site for a war. Instead, it refers to the locations where U.S. forces will be regularly conducting operations in peace, crisis, and war. Most of these operations will be conducted in peacetime for purposes of promoting engagement,

integration, and stability. The key point is that the U.S. operating perimeter may be enlarging even when no immediate threat exists or is expected. It may be enlarging for broader purposes that transcend planning for wars.

The trend toward an enlarging U.S. and Western operating perimeter in key regions is in the beginning stages today, though activities are already under way in the key regions. In Europe, the process of security enlargement began with NATO's PFP and its intervention in Bosnia. In 1999, NATO will begin admitting new members, and its "open-door" policy sets no limits on how far this process might go. In the Persian Gulf, U.S. involvement began in the 1980s with defense of the Gulf sea lanes and Saudi Arabia. In 1990–1991, the Gulf War led the United States to accept defense of Kuwait as a core strategic goal. Shortly afterward, the United States and other partners were enforcing peacetime "no-fly" zones over parts of Iraq. In the following years, the United States has been called upon to launch limited air strikes against Iraqi targets in the periodic crises that have occurred. Late 1997 found the United States deploying sizable air and naval forces to the Gulf to prepare for a large bombardment campaign that might have been needed to prevent Iraq from acquiring WMD. Thus, in the short span of only 10 years, the U.S. security perimeter in the Persian Gulf—measured in terms of geographic distance covered by U.S. military operations—had more than doubled.

In Asia, the United States largely withdrew from Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War and focused mostly on Northeast Asia. But in recent years, the United States has been compelled to send naval forces to help quell tensions between China and Taiwan. It also is now pursuing a dialogue with several Southeast Asian nations regarding future military cooperation. As is the case in Europe and the Persian Gulf, the trends in Asia seem pointed outward—toward a larger operating perimeter and new purposes and missions.

This trend's pace and ultimate destinations remain to be seen. It is, however, a new and growing strategic reality for today and tomorrow. Handling it will require careful planning and wise policies. Because the future is uncertain, the purpose of this chapter is not to advocate this trend or precisely forecast its future. Instead, the aim is to examine this trend's broad implications for the U.S. overseas presence.

## TOWARD A NEW STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

This analysis argues that, to ensure that the changes ahead in the U.S. overseas presence are carried out effectively, two important steps should be taken. First, a new *strategic planning framework* for overseas presence should be formulated. Second, a new *design concept* should also be created. As defined here, the term "strategic planning framework" means a set of ideas about geography and purposes that establishes basic directions for defense policy. The term "design concept" means something more specific. A design concept grows out of a strategic planning framework, but it also takes into account future trends in force structures and technology and provides more-concrete guidelines for planning, programming, and budgeting. Especially in an era of change, both steps are needed if future forces are to be developed effectively.

In all likelihood, the chief task in creating a new U.S. strategic planning framework will be to move beyond the currently predominant emphasis on threat-based planning. Because the international system seems headed in new directions, a creative approach to planning the future U.S. force posture abroad is called for.<sup>1</sup> The need for creativity is reinforced when stock is taken of the changes to U.S. forces that may take place as new technologies are introduced and new structures adopted in the coming decade. Although these changes are addressed in more detail in the next chapter, they are mentioned here because they reinforce the need for creative thinking.

The basic strategic challenge facing U.S. national security policy may be broader than it is now. Today, although the global situation is still dangerous, its core structure is relatively simple because the dynamics of the coming era have only begun to manifest themselves. As the United States looks into the future, it confronts the prospect of multiple changes that could lead to three very different types of international outcomes, which are portrayed in Figure 4.1. The best outcome would be a more harmonious world than exists today. The

---

<sup>1</sup>For an appraisal of current U.S. Policy, see President Clinton's, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Clinton, 1994). See also a similar Clinton document (Clinton, 1997).

RAND MR956-4.1

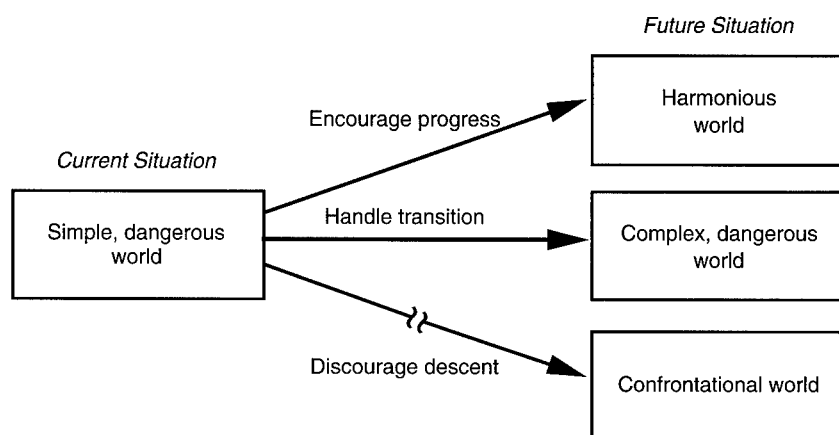


Figure 4.1—Influencing the Future International System

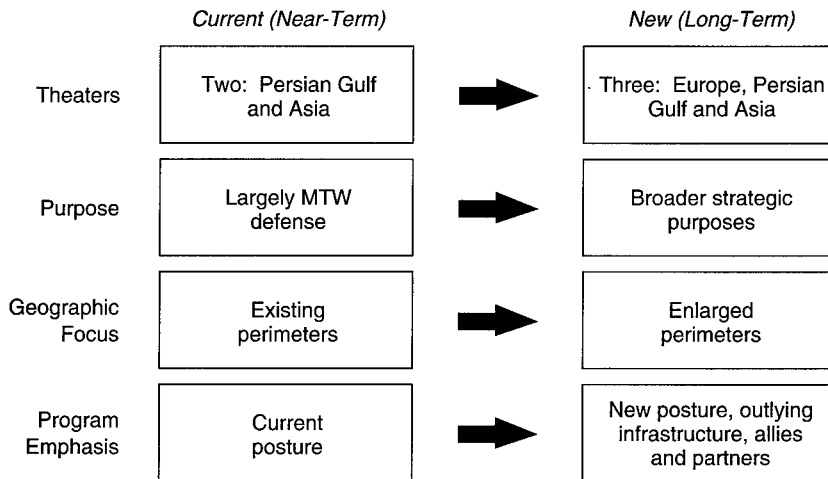
worst outcome would be a descent into a confrontational world marked by intense political conflict in all three major theaters. In the middle of the spectrum is a third outcome: a global situation in which the degree of danger is similar to today's, but international politics are more complex. The United States thus confronts a threefold strategic challenge: to concurrently encourage progress toward a harmonious world, discourage descent into a confrontational world, and safely handle the transition to a complex world.

The need to exert this kind of influence over future international affairs reinforces the need for a new strategic planning framework for the U.S. overseas presence. The QDR set the stage by developing three core concepts for a new U.S. defense strategy: shape, respond, and prepare. *Shape* refers to efforts to mold the future international environment in ways that promote positive trends, prevent destabilizing developments, and deter aggression. *Respond* means efforts to deal with future contingencies across the entire spectrum of conflict, including MTWs and smaller-scale contingencies (SSCs). *Prepare* means efforts to improve U.S. forces so that they can deal with an uncertain future. By articulating these three concepts, the QDR has successfully established an improved U.S. defense strategy that is aligned with the security challenges ahead. But it has not established

a full-scale strategic planning framework for determining how the U.S. overseas presence should respond.

Figure 4.2 identifies the key components of change involved in creating such a new framework. At the risk of oversimplification, it can be said that current U.S. defense planning protects existing strategic perimeters, is mostly concentrated in two theaters, and is largely designed for MTW defense operations. To deal with future situations, U.S. defense planning will need to deal with an enlarged geographic perimeter, address all three theaters, and pursue strategic purposes that go beyond MTW defense operations. Defense planning will therefore need to contemplate how to modify today's U.S. overseas presence by developing an altered posture, an outlying infrastructure, and better-prepared allies and partners.<sup>2</sup>

RAND MR956-4.2



**Figure 4.2—Components of a New Strategic Planning Framework for U.S. Overseas Presence**

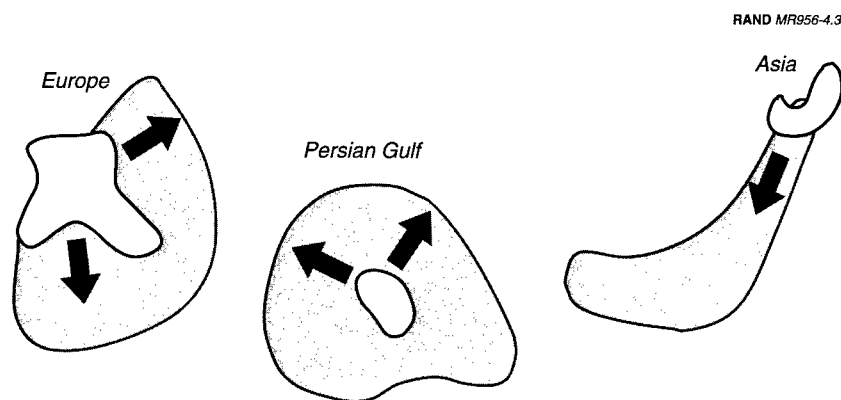
<sup>2</sup>For a similar analysis, see Davis, Gompert, and Kugler (1997) and Kugler (1997)



So far, the most important change has not gained widespread public recognition. The U.S. and Western strategic perimeter is already enlarging outward, and will continue doing so in the coming years. This trend already has started to be manifested in Europe and in parts of the Middle East. PFP and ongoing peace support operations in Bosnia and Iraq are examples of what may lie ahead. The coming years may witness many additional U.S. and Western military activities in areas that would have been beyond consideration only a few years ago. A sensible U.S. strategy will limit involvements in distant areas in order to avoid overstretching U.S. resources and becoming entangled in areas of peripheral interest to the United States. Even if the need for such limits is kept in mind, however, the trend toward increasing outward involvements seems obvious. Moreover, this trend may be global, rather than confined to a single theater. Figure 4.3 illustrates the global impact of this trend.

Figure 4.3 suggests that today, U.S. overseas forces are still mostly protecting a strategic perimeter inherited from the Cold War. Powerful strategic currents, however, are pushing this perimeter outward. One reason is that U.S. interests are enlarging as a result of an expanding world economy, trade and investment patterns, the spread of Western values into new regions, growing political ties with many countries, and engagement policies toward former adversaries. Another factor is that the interests of key allies, such as Germany and Japan, are also enlarging in similar ways, thereby pulling U.S. involvements along with them. A further development is that new-era geopolitical dynamics in outlying regions can no longer be ignored. For example, future adversaries may acquire the long-range missiles for delivering WMD against Western targets, thereby mandating U.S. systems that can strike against them on their homeland. Also, political and economic changes in outlying regions can create the type of deep-seated instabilities that spread everywhere, thereby threatening Western countries. A good example is the Bosnian war, which threatened neighboring countries with refugee flows, ethnic tensions, and nationalism before the Dayton peace accord was signed.

As a result, the United States and its Western allies will be less able to insulate themselves behind their current geopolitical walls. Their economic interests and values will lead them to look outward, and



- How can expanding geographic scope be handled with limited resources?
- How should U.S. overseas presence posture change?

**Figure 4.3—Impact of Enlarging U.S. Security Perimeter**

their security requirements will have a reinforcing effect. This trend probably will be manifested in all three theaters, especially Europe. Ten years from now, NATO will be enlarged eastward, NATO forces may be performing peace operations not only in the Balkans but also elsewhere on Europe's periphery, and NATO forces may be dealing more actively with North Africa. In the Persian Gulf, the predominant focus will still be on protecting the GCC countries, but the perimeter for U.S. operations probably will enlarge across the Middle East. There, U.S. forces may find themselves dealing with new partners, new adversaries, and new situations. In Asia, China's mounting power, coupled with the growing economic importance of other Asian countries, points toward a broader U.S. security focus beyond Northeast Asia, to cover the huge zone stretching from Okinawa to Southeast Asia. Again, the combination of new partners, new adversaries, and new geopolitical situations could yield more and different types of U.S. military activities than are necessary today. Other regions probably will be less important to U.S. defense strategy, not only because lesser interests are often involved but also because the dangers there will have less far-reaching consequences.

Even in tranquil zones, however, the United States and its allies will require sufficient military strength to keep them stable and peaceful

and to allow them to respond quickly if a situation suddenly sours. They also will need to work together so that each participant can make sensible decisions about how to prepare its forces. NATO's experience suggests that, as a general rule, the defense requirements of peacetime are about two-thirds those of a threatening environment. If so, the prospect of enlarging the U.S. security perimeter into peaceful zones poses significant defense implications of its own.

If this strategic enlargement fully unfolds, U.S. and allied forces will be compelled to conduct military operations in a host of distant, unfamiliar areas. There, they will not possess the well-developed infrastructure that has been created around their current bases. They will be dealing with new political conditions, new geography, and new military forces—friendly and not so friendly—and they will be performing a broader variety of military missions. Moreover, future requirements might call for the projection of military forces across long distances and at a fast pace. This development could enhance the premium on air forces, naval forces, and mobile ground forces that can deploy quickly and could perhaps lessen the usefulness of heavy ground forces that take weeks and months to deploy. The specific military implications will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. Suffice it here to note that the type of U.S. overseas presence needed to deploy and operate at long distances in all three theaters may be very different from today's.

As geographic enlargement occurs, how will broader strategic purposes be pursued? Figure 4.4 helps answer this important question by focusing on three key components of determining future U.S. overseas-presence forces and assets: strategic objectives, strategy precepts, and military missions.

### **New Strategic Objectives**

Currently, U.S. plans are heavily focused on the third strategic objective: defeating aggression where threats already exist. Figure 4.4 shows two additional objectives that may become increasingly influential. Both objectives focus on dealing with peacetime conditions. The first objective is to promote stability and integration. The second objective is to prevent conflict and war.

The objective of promoting stability and integration has several sub-objectives:

RAND MR956-4.4

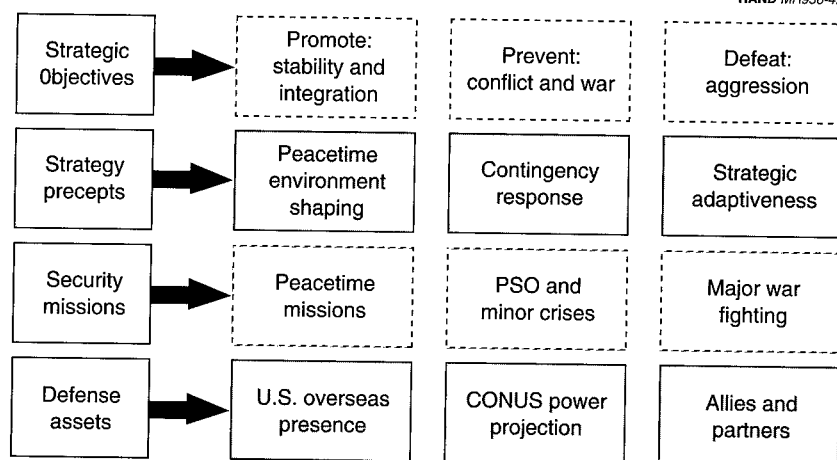


Figure 4.4—Components of Broader Strategic Purposes

- Protect U.S. influence, vital interests, and access to critical lines of communication
- Preserve the existing network of global alliances and strengthen their effectiveness for dealing with new-era challenges
- Support the spread of democracy, market economies, and cooperative conduct by establishing a stable foundation of regional security
- Integrate new members into the Western alliance network
- Encourage stability-enhancing arms control agreements
- Develop partnership relations with new countries and former adversaries
- Resolve existing conflicts and border disputes in ways that foster international cooperation.

The objective of preventing conflict and war also has subobjectives:

- Reassure vulnerable countries about their security so that they are encouraged to behave moderately

- Discourage arms buildups and competitive military dynamics that have destabilizing consequences
- Dissuade rogue powers from using military threats and other coercive policies to intimidate their neighbors and foster undesirable changes to the status quo
- Deter aggression and related uses of military force
- Resolve crises quickly and successfully, before they escalate into full-scale wars.

Thus, planning on the basis of multiple objectives is different from planning according to a single objective. Planners will be required to grapple with establishing priorities among these objectives and to strive for a balanced portfolio of military assets that can perform several dissimilar activities rather than carry out a single, dominant purpose. This does not imply that future U.S. force deployments can be designed in a manner that is oblivious to wartime requirements. U.S. overseas presence still must preserve the capacity to wage war. Thus, the elevation of peacetime objectives complicates the planning process.

### **New Strategy Precepts**

In addition to these new objectives, Figure 4.4 also identifies three strategy precepts as part of the new strategic planning framework. A *precept* is a general guideline for action. It articulates how actions are intended to achieve objectives. Precepts thus play quite an important role in defense strategy, because they help define the relationship between means and ends. During the Cold War, for example, U.S. defense strategy was guided by the objectives of containment, deterrence, and escalation control. Its key precepts were “forward defense” and “flexible response,” which defined how U.S. military forces were to be used in the pursuit of those objectives. These precepts played a major role in determining the U.S. defense posture. In particular, they helped determine the balance struck between nuclear forces and conventional forces. They proved to be good precepts for the Cold War. The challenge is to create similarly effective precepts for the coming era.

Today the dominant precept guiding U.S. overseas presence is that of contingency response, that is, the military actions to be taken when a

crisis or wartime contingency erupts. As mentioned previously, U.S. overseas forces are tailored to deal with the two canonical contingencies of MTW conflicts in the Persian Gulf and Korea, but they are also to be prepared for smaller contingencies, ranging from peace operations to SSCs. In the future, contingency response clearly will remain an important precept because U.S. overseas forces must be prepared for military emergencies that might occur in all theaters. However, the future probably will witness a broadening of the potential contingencies that must be considered, to include a wider variety of events than the two MTWs and associated SSCs.

The most worrisome contingencies of today lie in the Persian Gulf and Korea, but tomorrow they could arise in different places and take different forms. For example, the prospect of major warfare could reappear in Europe. In the Persian Gulf, future wars might be fought with WMD systems. In Asia, future wars might primarily be air and sea conflicts that are fought over control of sea lanes and islands lying off the Asian land mass. These conflicts might be smaller than today's MTWs, but they also might be larger. Equally important, they might generate assumptions very different from those used today about warning, mobilization, reinforcement timelines, campaign plans, and force employment concepts.

The bigger change is the growing role that probably will be played by the other two precepts. Peacetime environment shaping could be key to attaining the objectives of promoting stability and integration and preventing conflict and war. This precept refers to U.S. military activities that affect the political-military behavior of allies, partners, neutrals, and adversaries in peacetime. These activities are intended to shape the security environment of key regions by influencing the policies of key actors so that favorable outcomes that advance U.S. interests are produced. Environment-shaping activities help elevate U.S. influence and foster U.S. access to critical lines of communication and important geographic assets. They play an influential role in determining the military preparedness of alliances, coalitions, and partnerships. They also affect the military forces and strategies of neutrals and adversaries, and how these countries interact.

Environment shaping is performed by more than U.S. overseas-presence forces. Indeed, CONUS forces play an important role, as do U.S. diplomatic efforts and economic policies. In the broadest sense, it is the overall strategic strength of the United States and its foreign

policy stance that shapes the international environment. Nonetheless, U.S. overseas-presence forces clearly play quite an important role in this endeavor. They do so through a variety of mechanisms, all of which wield influence on the policies of many countries:

1. Simply being present on the scene. Daily presence of strong forces brings influence on its own because it signals U.S. intent and capability to defend its interests, thus dissuading and deterring potential troublemakers from behaving in a destabilizing fashion.
2. Promoting multinational defense integration with old and new allies.
3. Reassuring vulnerable countries that the United States cares about their security.
4. Pursuing engagement with former adversaries.
5. Building partnership relations with these countries.
6. Actively coercing and deterring rogues through the threat of strong military reprisals.
7. Resolving crises when they occur, while controlling escalation.

NATO and Europe provide a good example of how many of these mechanisms work. U.S. forces in Europe allow U.S. generals to play leading roles in NATO's command structure. They provide a key asset for forming multinational NATO corps, fighter wings, and naval task forces in ways that carry out the alliance's defense strategy. They promote common doctrine and interoperable procedures so that U.S. forces can work effectively with allied forces when a contingency occurs. They are now building military partnership relations with more than 20 countries in PFP. Also important, they credibly signal the unwavering U.S. commitment to NATO and Europe, and they are a demonstrable warning to potential rogues. Above all, they are visibly present in ways showing that the United States is a permanent power in Europe. What applies in Europe also applies to other regions in ways that may become increasingly important in future years.

Today, U.S. overseas forces are quite effective at shaping the environment within the existing Western security perimeter in all three

regions. The future challenge likely will be one of becoming effective at environment shaping in the enlarged U.S. security perimeter. That is, U.S. forces probably will be faced with the mandate to influence peacetime security affairs in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, North Africa, the greater Middle East<sup>3</sup> and Persian Gulf, and larger portions of Asia. Such developments affect future military missions as well as the composition of U.S. forces deployed abroad.

The third precept, strategic adaptivity, is even newer than environment shaping. It captures the QDR's emphasis on preparing for the future. Strategic adaptivity refers to the capacity of U.S. overseas-presence forces to react quickly and effectively to new conditions and surprising developments that radically alter the core security challenges being faced in key regions. It measures the capacity of U.S. forces to make strategic "U-turns" and to carry out new strategies and operations that may not have been anticipated when original defense plans were formed. The need for strategic adaptivity can arise for numerous reasons. For example, a new threat may appear. Or a new geographic area might become suddenly endangered for reasons other than the appearance of a specific enemy. An old alliance or coalition arrangement might collapse, or U.S. foreign policy might change in ways that create new commitments and security involvements. All of these changes, singly or in combination, can bring about new conditions that demand different U.S. military responses than previously was the case.

How important will strategic adaptivity become? During the Cold War, it was not a primary consideration, because the international system was relatively static. Even so, surprising developments did occur that compelled hasty, unanticipated U.S. responses. The Korean War is a good example, for it suddenly compelled U.S. forces to react to a surprising event for which they were not prepared. The events of 1989–1991 in Europe and the Persian Gulf show how the need for strategic adaptivity can occur on a grand scale. Almost overnight, U.S. defense policy and forces had to execute a strategic U-turn. The coming international era may bring about similar changes, with equivalent disruption and speed and with consider-

---

<sup>3</sup>"Greater Middle East" refers to the large zone between Turkey and Algeria and extending southward to the Persian Gulf.



able frequency. Strategic adaptivity therefore could become a key requirement for U.S. overseas forces.

Strategic adaptivity is measured by the flexibility of U.S. forces, that is, by their capability to perform peacetime missions, operational plans, and campaign plans that are different from those that originally led to the design of the existing force posture. A flexible U.S. posture is needed if this precept is to be preserved. Normally, a modular posture is needed that is composed of diverse assets that can be combined together in new, productive ways.

Thus, the future U.S. overseas presence may have to carry out three strategy precepts. The task will be easier if the U.S. forces needed for contingency response are the same as those needed for environment shaping and strategic adaptivity. But the task will be harder if the forces required by each precept differ in important ways. A balancing act would then be in order, requiring different forces than exist today.

### **New Military Missions**

Figure 4.4 identifies three types of military missions for overseas presence: peacetime missions, PSOs and minor crises, and major warfighting missions. All three types of missions are being performed today, and this will remain the case tomorrow. Significant changes, however, may transpire. One change is that peacetime missions may become more important, more diverse, and more demanding than they are today. Peacetime missions are those in which U.S. forces perform normal training and deployments, conduct exercises with allies and partners, perform other visitations and appearances, and carry out an array of signaling activities intended to influence potential rivals. As mentioned earlier, the coming era may experience an upsurge of coalition training and exercises with countries in Eastern Europe. In Asia, it may also see new peacetime deployment patterns and patrol activities of U.S. forces. An illustration would be the routine deployment of naval forces and fighter wings into Southeast Asia to conduct exercises with several countries and to signal U.S. intent to protect the vital sea lanes there.

A second change is that PSOs and minor crisis interventions may become more numerous than now. As discussed earlier, U.S. forces are already far more active in PSOs and related missions than during

the past. Examples are the presence of U.S. forces in Bosnia, their monitoring activities in Iraq, and their performance of humanitarian missions in sub-Saharan Africa. The consequence has been a rising optempo that has strained the capacity of European Command (EUCOM) and CENTCOM forces. Most observers expect these missions to continue or even increase in response to increasing economic and ethnic tensions in many areas. The number of minor crisis interventions may also increase. This trend was evident when U.S. forces recently had to rush to the Persian Gulf to put military pressure on Iraq. Another example is the deployment of two U.S. carriers to the vicinity of Taiwan when China began exerting military pressure on that country. How often will such interventions have to be launched in the coming years, and with what consequences? The answer is uncertain. What can be said is that PSO missions and crisis interventions probably will play roles of growing importance in the U.S. overseas presence.

A third change is that major warfighting missions may mutate. As discussed earlier, one concern is that U.S. forces might be compelled to participate in MTWs, including large theater wars that are different from those in the Persian Gulf and Korea. A more likely development is that U.S. overseas forces may be compelled to *prepare* for such events, even though they never occur. In Europe, U.S. forces will acquire new Article 5 commitments in the CEE region. These commitments might require EUCOM forces to participate in planning and programming for large NATO force deployments in an emergency. DoD's recent study of military requirements for NATO enlargement identified a notional NATO reinforcement posture of four divisions and six wings, one of each would be provided by the United States. Similar trends might unfold in the other theaters. In the Persian Gulf, events could compel U.S. forces to prepare for a bigger war than the current MTW, perhaps involving several adversaries, asymmetric enemy strategies, and use of WMD. In Asia, China's emergence as a regional power could lead to the emergence of new U.S. defense plans involving force operations on a wider scale than now envisioned for the Korea MTW.

Developments like these could bring about different operation and campaign plans than exist today. They also may mandate new approaches to performing combat missions in wartime. Today's predominant approach to combat missions is an offshoot of the

Persian Gulf war. A surprise enemy attack occurs, and U.S. forces rush to the scene. Initial operations focus on halting the enemy attack through use of airpower, missiles, deep-strike systems, and initially available ground forces. After this goal is accomplished, U.S. and allied forces continue to reduce the enemy's warfighting capacity through sustained air and firepower attacks, while additional reinforcements are deploying to the theater. When sufficient forces have arrived, a decisive counterattack is launched by U.S. and allied forces. This counterattack is a joint operation, carried out by a balanced array of ground, air, and naval forces that work together as a team. Once the counterattack succeeds, a favorable political outcome is reached and U.S. forces begin disengaging.

Although this vision of combat operations is appropriate to planning U.S. forces for the current era, wars different from those envisioned today may lead to new campaign plans and to a new array of combat missions. These different missions, in turn, could set the stage for designing different forces from those of today. Above all, the wide spectrum and diversity of potential future conflicts is likely to require a flexible U.S. posture that can carry out several types of military campaigns and mission plans in responsive, adaptive ways. For example, some conflicts may be dominated by ground operations, others by air missions, and still others by maritime missions. Likewise, some conflicts may be dominated by old-style combat and attrition, and others by deep strikes and fast maneuver. History suggests that wars tend to be driven by the political dynamics that give rise to them and by the terrain on which they are waged. They are often unpredictable, and once they begin, they can develop a surprising logic of their own. U.S. military forces may therefore not always be able to dictate the terms on which wars are fought or the doctrine and missions that will be demanded. Anticipatory and adaptive planning will therefore be important.

In addition, the need to perform combined operations—that is, operations with the forces of allies and coalition partners—is likely to be key to success at carrying out future missions and winning wars. Although many discussions of future military doctrine assume that U.S. forces will be operating alone, the reality is different. Even today, both MTWs are wars waged by multinational forces. This is especially true in Korea, where South Korea provides well over one-half of the forces for the defense plan. It also is true in the Persian

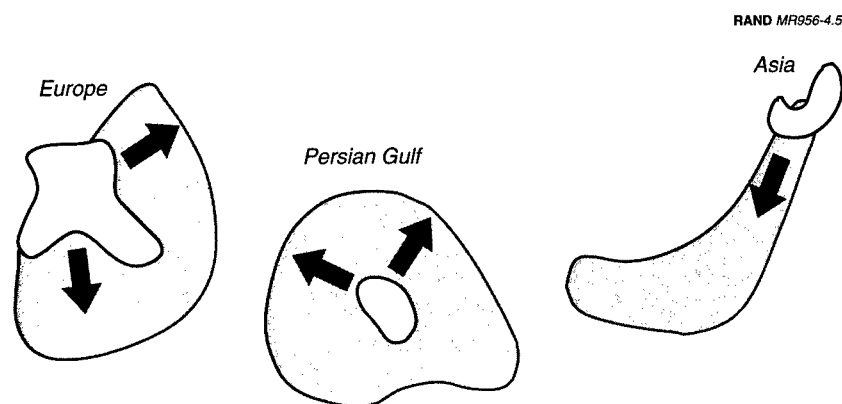
Gulf, where Arab and European countries may provide about one-third of the total forces for another Gulf War. The trend is likely to be toward increased emphasis on multinational operations. This reality is due not only to political considerations but also to the fact that, because the United States has a global strategy, it could be hard-pressed to concentrate large American forces in many conflicts. Consequently, a key challenge will be to ensure that as U.S. forces acquire modern technology, their doctrine remains compatible with the capabilities of allied forces.

### **TOWARD A NEW DESIGN CONCEPT**

The prospect of a new strategic planning framework calls for a new design concept that provides specific guidance for force planning and programming. This concept would replace the current emphasis on using the U.S. overseas presence principally as a form of stationary defense for protecting old Cold War borders and the existing security perimeter. However, this new concept would not seek to station large U.S. forces at locations in outer zones—that probably would be prohibited by political constraints and excessive costs. Instead, it would seek to transform U.S. forces so that they become instruments of regional power projection from their overseas locations. U.S. defense strategy thus would use two power-projection forces: one stationed in CONUS, and the other based overseas, closer to areas of likely operations.

This change would apply primarily to zones no longer directly threatened by aggression. U.S. forces now deployed in these zones would acquire an outward-looking mentality. Their current bases would become facilities for launching them on projection missions in peace, crisis, and war. The U.S. Navy already thinks in these terms as a result of its maritime focus. U.S. ground and air forces would also begin thinking in these terms, focusing on developing reception facilities, infrastructure, operating bases, and prepositioned equipment in appropriate places. Figure 4.5 portrays this change for all three theaters. The Asia portrayal assumes that the threat of a Korean war has diminished.

A new design concept would, however, require more than an emphasis on power projection in new outlying areas. Table 4.1



- Defend against continuing and new threats to vital interests
- Use existing locations to project power into outlying regions
- In outlying areas, develop virtual presence, infrastructure, and reception facilities

**Figure 4.5—A New Power-Projection Concept for U.S. Overseas Presence**

summarizes the nine factors envisioned by this analysis. The first six factors derive from the international security environment: They determine the types of future U.S. military operations to be carried out. The last three factors derive from internal U.S. defense planning: They determine the types of U.S. military forces that are chosen to perform these operations. These three factors are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

This design concept is very different from today's. In handling external factors, it proposes new approaches to strategic objectives, security precepts, military missions, and cooperation with allies and partners. In handling internal factors, it incorporates new features into U.S. defense planning. These features include an innovative approach to force composition; new defense technologies to substitute capital for labor, thereby producing reengineered structures; and effective expenditure of available funds on high-priority overseas investments.

Each of these nine factors would push the U.S. overseas presence in new directions. Even more important is the cumulative effect they

**Table 4.1**  
**Components of a New Design Concept for U.S. Overseas Presence**

Factors	Current Concept	New Concept
<b>External</b>		
Geography	Defense of old borders and current perimeters	Security of new borders and new, outer perimeters
Operational mode	Stationary operations, except for maritime forces	Greater emphasis on power projection for all forces
Objectives	Primary emphasis on defeating aggression	Greater emphasis on promoting stability and preventing conflicts in peacetime
Precepts	Primary emphasis on responding to canonical contingencies	Greater emphasis on environment shaping and strategic adaptivity
Missions	Primary emphasis on major warfighting missions	Greater emphasis on PSO and limited crises
Role of allies and partners	Large role in Europe and Korea; limited elsewhere	Major role in all regions, with better forces
<b>Internal</b>		
U.S. force composition	Linear approach aimed at maintaining current force mix	Nonlinear approach that considers different mixes
Technology	New technology incorporated into current structures	New technology used to create new structures
Investment plans	Preservation of current bases and facilities	Development of new bases and facilities in outlying areas

could have on the U.S. posture when combined. Added together, these factors point toward a future U.S. overseas presence that may be very different from today's. The challenge will then be to define a better U.S. posture in specific terms, and then to launch the innovative programs needed to bring it to life.

## FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS IN EACH REGION

How will the U.S. overseas presence in the three regions be affected by the developments described previously? As illustrated in Figure 4.6, U.S. strategy should target all three theaters, for the United States will have vital interests and high-priority objectives at stake in all of them. This study concludes that a sensible U.S. global strategy would aim at consolidating and accelerating the trend toward stability in Europe, so that adequate attention can be devoted to the two more-endangered regions. In the Persian Gulf, U.S. strategy may be compelled to focus on building greater responsiveness and a stronger coalition against more-dangerous threats than exist today. In Asia, the future situation may call for a U.S. strategy aimed at resolving the Korea standoff so that regionwide stability can be pursued through enlarged security operations.

### Europe

Figure 4.7 portrays how the future U.S. strategic agenda in Europe would affect U.S. force deployments. The future likely will bring about new NATO security commitments, wider military operations, and perhaps new dangers—all of which have implications for U.S. forces there. The United States and NATO will be carrying out residual Article 5 missions, while pursuing alliance reforms aimed at developing better NATO power-projection capabilities and projecting security and stability along Europe's periphery. This agenda is likely to dominate NATO defense strategy and plans in the coming years.<sup>4</sup>

To stabilize the CEE region, NATO will be enlarging there and integrating the forces of new members, while striving to retain a partnership relation with Russia and other countries that are not gaining membership in the alliance. The Madrid Summit of 1997 announced that Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic will be admitted by 1999, but NATO enlargement will not stop there. Many observers believe that such countries as Romania, Slovenia, Austria, and

<sup>4</sup>For more analysis of enlargement trends in Europe, see Kugler (1996).

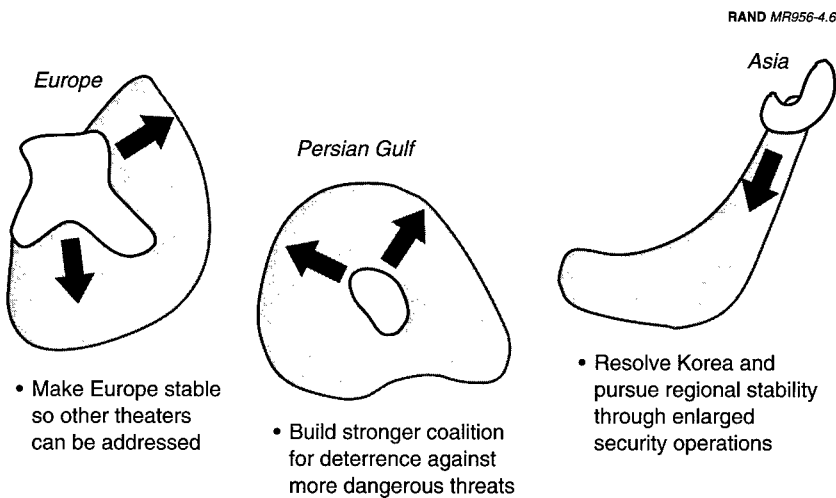


Figure 4.6—Dominant Strategic Objectives in Key Theaters

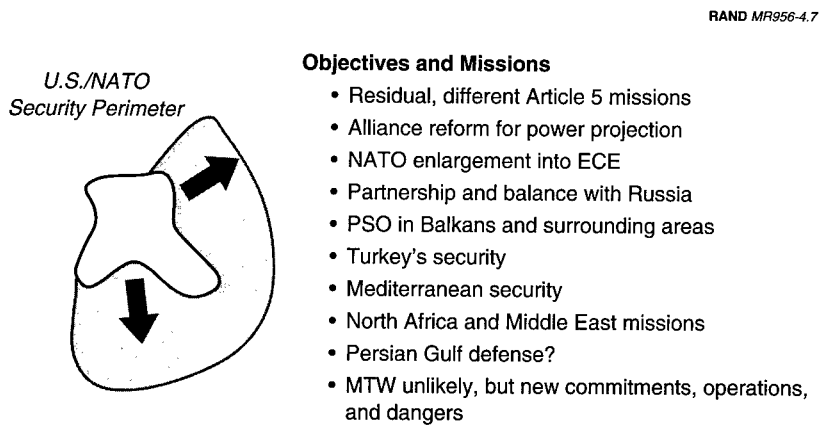


Figure 4.7—Future U.S./NATO Strategic Agenda

Slovakia may gain entrance in the coming decade and that NATO probably will be developing increased security ties to the Baltic countries and Ukraine. Especially since a "Founding Act" with



Russia has been signed that creates a new NATO–Russia Council for consultation, NATO will be carrying out its security commitments to new members through a power-projection strategy from Western Europe. As a result, the mission of carrying out the defense dimensions of NATO enlargement and related partnership activities will constitute a large portion of U.S. military activities in Europe during the coming decade. To accomplish its objective of stabilizing the Balkans, NATO may be conducting future PSO missions there and in nearby zones. To bring greater stability to southern regions, NATO will be developing a stronger military presence in the Mediterranean from Turkey to North Africa, as well as in the Middle East and perhaps even the Persian Gulf.

These strategic objectives thus point to a NATO that itself is looking outward, enlarging, and conducting new military missions in new places. The U.S. military presence in Europe is likely to do the same because it responds to NATO's strategic directions and helps lead NATO when it launches new strategic directions. Notwithstanding EUROM's role in Bosnia and Turkey, U.S. forces today still remain mostly at their old Cold War bases in Germany and Western Europe. The future probably will witness their operating with growing frequency in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean. As this shift takes place, U.S. forces doubtless will be called upon to respond to periodic minor crises, but their main efforts probably will focus on environment shaping and the political goals of promoting stability and preventing conflict. For the most part, U.S. forces will be performing peacetime missions focused on training, exercises, multinational integration, and stability-enhancing presence. These missions increasingly will be taking place in different locations and with different countries than in the past.

In what ways how could this forecast change? If reform falters in Russia but that country somehow recovers its strength and again becomes a military adversary of an enlarged NATO, threat-based planning could reappear in Europe, though probably to a lesser degree than during the Cold War. The opposite scenario is that Europe might make quite rapid strides toward stability and integration. In this event, a strong security foundation based on U.S. and NATO military strength might no longer be necessary. Both of these scenarios, however, are improbable over the next 10–15 years.

## Persian Gulf

Figure 4.8 portrays the future U.S. strategic agenda in the Persian Gulf. The primary U.S. objective there will be to maintain Western access to Gulf oil, while encouraging the Arab-Israeli peace process and better Western relations with friendly Arab countries. The hostile agendas of Iraq and Iran, coupled with the prospect of WMD proliferation and growing arsenals of conventional weapons in several countries, could, however, make the Gulf region even more conflict-laden than it is now. As a result, threat-based planning by CENTCOM may continue for a long time. But preparing for war will not be CENTCOM's only important objective. CENTCOM forces probably will be called upon to help support larger U.S. political and strategic objectives, to foster coalition relationships with countries willing to support U.S. policy, and to participate in PSO missions when they are important to regional stability.<sup>5</sup>

Will CENTCOM's geographic zone of operations enlarge? This zone already is quite large, but it could become bigger as a result of new partners, new adversaries, proliferation, and local instabilities

RAND MR956-4.8

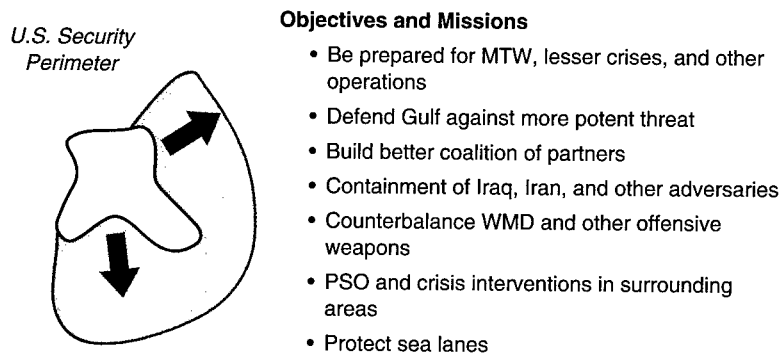


Figure 4.8—Future U.S. Strategic Agenda in the Persian Gulf

<sup>5</sup>For an analysis of strategic trends in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, see Blackwill and Sturmer (1997).

requiring commitment of U.S. forces. Indeed, the growing importance of U.S. military operations in North Africa and the Middle East could produce a de facto overlap of areas of responsibility between EUCOM and CENTCOM. Meanwhile, developments in South Asia—including the nuclearizing policies of Pakistan and India—could draw CENTCOM and PACOM closer together. As this trend matures, it will underscore the importance of having a permanent and altered U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf.

This forecast could change in one of two extreme ways. In the worst case, adversarial relations with Iraq and Iran could intensify, anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism could spread across the Middle East, and proliferation could accelerate. U.S. defense planning would then be driven more by threat-based planning than is the case today, while also being pulled outward to contain, deter, and defeat new threats. In the best case, both Iraq and Iran could undergo changes in their governments that bring more pro-Western regimes to power. Along with this positive development could come progress in the Arab-Israeli peace process. U.S. defense planning would then no longer have to worry about protecting the Gulf oil fields against potent threats. The primary peacetime mission of U.S. forces would be to build partnership relations and integrative ties with a host of friendly countries. However, although neither of these scenarios can be ruled out, they do not seem to be probable.

## Asia

Figure 4.9 displays the U.S. strategic agenda in Asia. Two trends stand out. The first trend is the likely broadening of PACOM's geographic scope beyond Northeast Asia. Asia's political, economic, and military affairs all point toward a steady increase of U.S. military activity along the large crescent stretching from Japan to Southeast Asia, and perhaps even into South Asia. The second trend is the growing importance of U.S. political and strategic objectives even if the Korea military standoff continues. Threat-based planning seems likely to decline in relative significance. However, if Korea reunifies, threat-based planning in Asia might become a thing of the past. The large network of U.S. military bases in Northeast Asia, in turn, could

RAND MR956-4.9

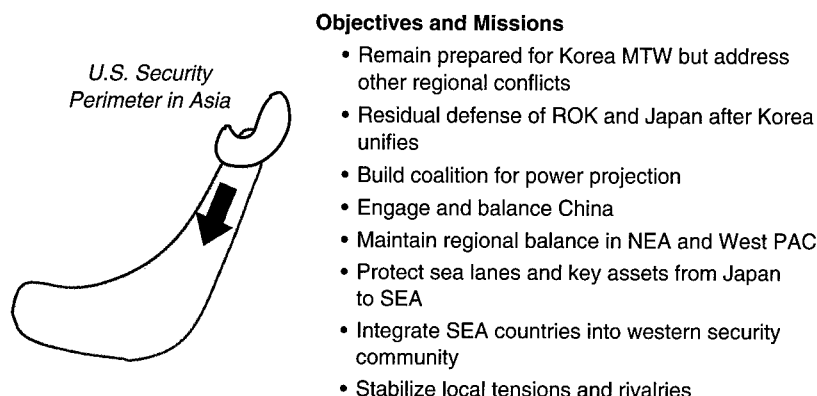


Figure 4.9—Future U.S. Strategic Agenda in Asia

become a foundation not only for protecting that region in the new era, but also for projecting U.S. military power southward, into a zone where U.S. forces once operated in strength but are no longer present in large numbers.<sup>6</sup>

In Northeast Asia, the primary U.S. objective will be to preserve close alliance relationships with Japan and Korea to provide for the security of both countries. Now that the Soviet Union no longer poses a military threat to Japan, the interesting long-term issues are the future of U.S.–South Korea relations and the U.S. military presence in Korea, if Korea unifies. Korea may want to retain some U.S. forces on the peninsula, if they are available, to help make a reunified Korea secure in the coming era. Whatever happens, both Japan and South Korea probably will still want a large U.S. presence in their vicinity to foster regional stability as these two countries begin interacting with Russia and China in a geopolitical setting considerably different from that of today. The United States probably will reach a similar conclusion.

Although the United States seems destined to remain a military power in Northeast Asia, future U.S. military activities will be pulled

<sup>6</sup>For an analysis of future defense issues in Asia, see Calder (1996).

to the South. The dominant U.S. strategic objective will be to maintain the security of the long, precarious sea lane that stretches from Southeast Asia to Japan and the United States. Because a large portion of world commerce and U.S. trade uses this sea lane, protecting it will remain a vital U.S. national interest. As an outgrowth of this interest and economic trends in Asia, U.S. military forces probably will also be called upon to help promote regional stability and integration by developing closer defense ties with many countries in South Asia. Examples include the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and even Vietnam. Likewise, U.S. forces will be called upon to help prevent regional conflict if China emerges as an assertive power with the intent of exerting influence in East Asia and the Western Pacific, or if other countries develop similar ambitions of their own. U.S. defense concepts would then focus not on threats and potential wars, but instead on fostering an enlarged network of Asian countries that cooperate together in security affairs and on maintaining a regional balance of power through the presence of sizable U.S. military forces that are capable of operating across the region's large seas.

How could this forecast change? If China becomes a true enemy and a serious military threat, U.S. strategy would be compelled to embrace an Asian form of containment and deterrence, and U.S. defense concepts and forces would become animated by threat-based planning. Alternatively, if China emerges as a cooperative country, tensions across Asia would subside, and U.S. defense planning could focus more on developing widespread integrative security ties (including China) than on maintaining a stabilizing regional balance of power. Barring these two improbable extremes, Asia may be headed toward an old-style geopolitics in which regional stability will depend partly on success at establishing a political equilibrium as well as a military balance. The U.S. military presence in Asia could then head toward the new design concept in major ways.

#### **THE ROLE OF ALLIES AND COALITION PARTNERS IN POWER PROJECTION**

If future strategic requirements are to be met, a better U.S. overseas presence alone will not be enough. The future also will require better forces from allies and coalition partners. A sizable response is

needed because a wide variety of requirements call out to be met. The great gaping hole in allied capabilities today is defense of the Persian Gulf. The Europeans are as dependent upon Gulf oil as the United States, maybe more so. Yet their Gulf presence is minor. It is marked by modest bilateral ties with some GCC countries, coupled with periodic, small deployments by British and French forces. If another big Gulf war were to occur, the Europeans plan to send no more combat forces than they deployed in 1990–1991; even those forces were not large compared to what the United States deployed. Persian Gulf defense today remains mostly the responsibility of the United States and local Arab countries. Elsewhere, the picture varies, but overall it is not much brighter. The NATO allies may be capable of a single peace-keeping mission or small crisis intervention, but not much more on Europe's periphery. In Asia, America's principal allies, Japan and South Korea, cannot project power at all. The appropriate conclusion is that greater U.S.-allied cooperation is needed.

Fostering greater U.S.-allied cooperation to perform new military missions in outlying areas raises deeply political issues. The existing Western alliance networks in Europe and Asia were originally created to wage the Cold War. They also were created to defend geographical locations that were vital to common Western interests: both the United States and its allies agreed on their importance, and on the need for close military collaboration to help defend them. The presence of a serious military threat further cemented this collaboration. However, a different geostrategic situation is now emerging. The threat is gone, and equally significant, the importance of many interests in the outlying areas is less clear cut. Nor is a common strategy readily apparent, and even when one does beckon, the old rules about burden-sharing and military roles do not necessarily apply. More fundamentally, the United States itself is sometimes accused of thinking in isolationist and unilateralist terms. But the larger problem stems from the political attitudes of the allies. In both Europe and Asia, many allied countries now focus on their local problems. Some are coming to believe that with economic competition rising in importance, they have less reason to pursue a common security agenda with the United States than in the past.

Forging a major increase in allied capabilities for deploying forces into outlying regions runs up against formidable strategic barriers as

a result of the Cold War's legacy. In all three theaters, key U.S. alliances are still deeply embedded in old border defense missions. Indeed, they are more embedded in these missions than are U.S. overseas-presence forces, which at least are equipped with many of the assets needed for expeditionary missions. This situation is true in Europe, where Germany is only beginning to overcome its history and its current aversion to projecting power outside its borders. Britain and France are more willing, but they long ago withdrew from major involvements in the Middle East and elsewhere. NATO itself is only beginning to move into power projection and remains mostly a border defense alliance. In Asia, Japan labors under its history, its aversion to accepting bigger security responsibilities, and the attitudes of many countries across the region. No other Asian country thinks much about power projection, and there are no collective defense mechanisms to encourage multilateral cooperation of this sort. The bilateral treaties with Japan and South Korea aim solely at defending those countries, and the once-robust U.S. military ties with Southeast Asian countries have atrophied over the past two decades. It is also true in the Persian Gulf, where existing bilateral security agreements focus on defending friendly countries from external invasion rather than projecting power elsewhere.

Because the old-era strategic model remains in practice in all three theaters, it must be altered if a better allied capability is to evolve. Today, defense of current borders and old security perimeters remains a multilateral responsibility that is shared equally by U.S. and allied forces. Power projection to outlying zones, however, is carried out through a "quasi-unilateral" model in which the United States provides either all of the forces or 80 to 90 percent of them. What the emerging situation requires is the uprooting of alliance relationships in all three theaters that leads to a "shared responsibility" model, in which the United States still commits forces to these missions but only as a leader of sizable allied forces that have important responsibilities of their own.

A strong political consensus in favor of shared responsibility will need to emerge in these countries. At the moment, no such consensus exists among the political leadership in most of these countries, and their military establishments are too locked into bureaucratic inertia to contemplate any radical steps. Yet there are encouraging signs that the problem is starting to be recognized in both Europe

and Asia. In many places, the idea of building better projection is being regarded as a future goal even though it is rejected as impractical in today's climate. If a sufficient consensus for action is to emerge anytime soon, the United States will need to express its desire for military reforms more vocally than it does today. In most countries, the barriers are too powerful to be overcome without U.S. pressure and leadership. The United States may be able to use its overseas presence in Europe and Asia as an instrument to help encourage allied reforms. If so, this could become one of the most important roles to be played by U.S. overseas forces in the coming years.

The potential availability of allied forces for power projection is beyond dispute. Today, the global U.S. overseas presence adds up to only about 3 division-equivalents, 6 fighter wings, 3 carriers, 3 ARGs, and 30 naval combatants. Allied forces dwarf this posture. The NATO allies deploy fully 56 divisions (about one-half active-duty units), 50 wing-equivalents, 6 small carriers, and 300 major naval combatants. In Asia, South Korea and Japan deploy 38 divisions, 12 wing-equivalents, and 175 major ship combatants. By allocating only 10 percent to 20 percent of their large forces to projection missions and developing the necessary capabilities, the allies could double or even triple the current number of total forces available for this purpose.

This increase could greatly ease the burdens on the U.S. overseas presence for performing new-era missions in all three theaters, and it could greatly increase confidence that these missions can be performed. In particular, it could enhance the capacity of U.S. and allied forces to perform concurrent missions.

NATO is the most probable candidate for developing improved projection capabilities. It already is creating a flexible command structure to perform new missions in the form of Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs). Today, European countries allocate about 9 divisions, 11 wing-equivalents, and 50 naval combatants to NATO's Rapid Reaction Force—the mainstay of NATO projection forces. One-half of these forces come from Allied Forces, Central Command (AFCENT) nations, and the other half from Allied Forces, Southern Europe (AFSOUTH) nations. These forces seem to provide impressive combat capabilities and a flexible array of assets for performing



a wide variety of future missions. The problem is that most of the Europeans lack the C4I systems, logistic support units, and strategic mobility to project these forces to significant distances in a timely fashion, and to perform sustained missions once they are deployed. NATO's current goal is to project only four of these divisions at any single time. In reality, however, it has the capability to project only about one or two of them with adequate speed and power.

Evidence of this lack of capabilities is already apparent. When Desert Shield was launched in late 1990, only the British and French were able to send significant forces—a division apiece, plus air and sea units. These forces took two to three months to deploy, and they had to rely on U.S. forces for logistical support once they arrived. NATO's reluctance to enter Bosnia was due partly to political doubts, but also partly to a lack of military capabilities. Once the decision to intervene was made, months of planning and movement were required before the Implementation Force was able to arrive in Bosnia. If NATO is required to send large reinforcements to help defend Turkey (an Article 5 mission), some four to five months would be needed for a multidivision ACE Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) to arrive there. This is too long a time for Turkey or elsewhere.

These deficiencies could be remedied by a 10-year, NATO-wide program aimed at acquiring the necessary assets. NATO has implemented a gradual 10-year plan several times before, with considerable success. It can do so again if its members make the decision to embrace improved power projection as a high-priority goal. NATO could play the leadership role by setting force goals and coordinating country plans, and the individual nations could implement the required programs so that they lead to a combined capability. Because no new combat forces need to be created, the necessary assets would not be prohibitively expensive. The annual cost probably would be only 2 to 3 percent of the \$160 billion that the European members of NATO already spend on defense. If multiple nations participate, the financial burdens would be distributed among many countries rather than concentrated on a few. If necessary, money could be made available by retiring some of NATO's border defense forces, with no serious loss to security. If these steps are taken, NATO could acquire a serious power-projection capability by 2010 or sooner—including sufficient forces for carrying out robust

PSOs, crisis interventions, and combat operations at longer distances than it can today.

An appropriate design concept would alter NATO's current ARRC. For example, NATO might create a reinforcement posture for carrying out new missions in the CEE region. It might create a second posture for the southern region, which could cover contingencies from Turkey to North Africa. It might also design a posture for the Persian Gulf. It thus would acquire three separate postures for projection missions in three different places. The total force may be more than 25 percent to 50 percent larger than the current ARRC of nine allied divisions, but it would be organized into separate, smaller formations that would have real capabilities for the missions being performed.

The strategic effect could be especially significant for AFCENT. At the moment, AFCENT remains NATO's premier border defense force, and continues to focus mostly on Central Europe. The coming years may find it moving away from this mission, toward becoming mostly a power-projection command, with missions to the east and south. Whereas today only about 25 percent of its active forces have projection missions, tomorrow nearly all of its forces may fall into this category. The effect on AFSOUTH probably will be less transforming. Even so, such countries as Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Turkey might be called upon to act on their current commitments to the ARRC.

Whether the NATO countries will muster the political willingness to pursue this strategic departure remains to be seen. Germany's stance will be key because it possesses the large, modern ground and air forces to make a big difference. If the political resolve is mustered in Germany and elsewhere, improved European forces could help perform a host of new-era missions outside NATO's current borders that today are the primary responsibility of U.S. forces. One obvious mission is to carry out new NATO security commitments in the CEE region, and future operations in the Balkans. European forces also could carry a large share of the growing security load in the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East. In addition, they could help perform security and defense missions in the Persian Gulf, thereby easing pressures not only on overseas-deployed U.S. forces there, but also on U.S. forces based in CONUS. A European contri-

bution in the Persian Gulf, moreover, could mean that more U.S. forces are freed to perform global missions elsewhere.

This departure would raise a host of political issues regarding NATO's strategic character as it becomes an alliance increasingly oriented to performing non-Article 5 missions. Such a change would require the United States and Europe to cooperate politically in several sensitive areas, such as diplomacy in the Middle East. It also would obligate NATO to grapple with troublesome issues about how roles and missions are to be allocated among the participants. Provided these matters can be resolved, the potential military and security benefits are worthwhile. They could spell the difference between stability and instability in both Europe and the greater Middle East and Persian Gulf. They could also help avert a drifting apart of the transatlantic alliance that might occur as a result of an inward-looking European attitude and American complaints that the European allies are taking a "free ride."

In the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, the United States has had some success in recruiting local coalition partners. During the Gulf War, for example, Egypt and Syria sent forces to assist the U.S.-led coalition. Since then, U.S. forces have conducted periodic exercises and related consultations with several countries, but progress has been slow. The ideal would be a firm coalition of partners that together provide a sizable pool of capable forces—for example, three divisions and three wings—for a wide range of contingencies. However, because the volatile politics of this region complicate any such attempt to mobilize permanent partners and large forces, ad hoc practices probably will continue to be followed. Even so, small steps could be helpful. Currently, U.S. policy focuses primarily on encouraging the GCC states to work more closely together. For some future operations, such other Arab countries as Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco might choose to send forces. If the Israeli-Arab dispute is ever settled, the new setting might permit Israeli forces to work with U.S. forces in some cases.

Even a moderate number of local forces could have high leverage, because U.S. forces stationed in the Persian Gulf in peacetime are small. A contribution of this sort could be not only helpful in PSO missions and small crises, but also in the event of another major Gulf war. Local forces could also help reduce the odds of enemy success

in the weeks before large U.S. reinforcements could rush to the scene. In addition, greater U.S. efforts to work with local military partners could benefit American interests and the pursuit of regional stability and pro-Western policies.

In Asia, using Japanese and Korean forces to assist U.S. forces in performing future regional security missions is a controversial idea. This is due to Japan's history, the lack of collective security mechanisms in Asia, and the fact that so far, South Korea and Japan have clung to border-defense strategies. Yet change may be in the air. Japan has the world's third-largest defense budget, plus enough forces to undertake projection missions without leaving its homeland unprotected. Some years ago, it agreed to perform defense missions up to 1,000 km beyond its borders, and recently it agreed to begin accepting larger responsibilities, particularly for logistics support to U.S. forces in Northeast Asian crises. Some South Korean officials have spoken of a regional role for their forces in the event that the North Korean threat fades. If the Korean peninsula becomes peaceful, South Korea probably will have enough forces to perform regional missions while leaving its homeland defense situation intact. Neither Japan nor South Korea has projection forces today, but both countries possess the financial resources to send portions of their forces to distant places.

Thus, it is possible that some years from now, both Japan and South Korea might be willing and able to commit forces to projection missions and regional operations. This step could require modification of the existing security relationships with Japan and Korea, followed by combined planning that creates joint task forces under U.S. leadership. A reasonable goal might be a Japanese and Korean posture of 3 divisions, 3 wings, and 30 naval combatants that can project power. Perhaps both countries will focus their commitments on air and naval forces, while providing smaller ground forces for PSO missions and limited crisis interventions. Successful efforts to mobilize military contributions from the Southeast Asia countries could ease the task facing U.S. forces of bringing greater security to that region. Indeed, growing military collaboration with these countries could contribute to building collective security mechanisms in Southeast Asia—a goal that is starting to be recognized by several countries but is not yet being seriously pursued.

How can U.S. overseas forces be used to encourage greater participation by allies and coalition partners in power-projection missions? The answer varies from region to region, but some general principles apply to all three of them:

1. Leadership by example is key. Because the allies tend to follow U.S. leadership, they will normally be reluctant to participate in missions shunned by U.S. forces. Hence, the regular willingness to commit at least some U.S. forces to all critical operations is required if success is to be achieved.
2. The United States will need to show a consistent willingness to welcome combined operations with allied forces, to train and exercise with allied forces for projection missions, and to grant them appropriate positions in command structures.
3. U.S. forces have special assets that can be used to help make the projection task easier for allies, including strategic lift, C4ISR systems, high-technology weapons, and logistic support.
4. Roles and missions can be allocated between U.S. and allied forces that take advantage of useful capabilities possessed by the allies.
5. The United States will be acquiring new weapons and RMA assets in the coming years that can be used to help prepare allied forces for the new doctrines that will have to be developed.

These mechanisms can work only if allies and coalition partners are themselves willing to accept greater responsibility for projection missions. If they are, these mechanisms can help ease the transition.

In Europe, the United States has developed its best record for working closely with allies. Yet even here, further steps can be taken. One example is U.S. military participation in NATO enlargement missions. Another is closer cooperation with allied forces in the Mediterranean in such missions as sea control, ballistic missile defense, and combined naval training. In the Persian Gulf, the past six years have not witnessed a growth of U.S. activity with the European allies and other potential partners that reflects the progress made during the Gulf War. An open attitude by U.S. forces to major allied contributions to defense plans there could help create opportunities for allies to become more involved. In Asia, PACOM forces

will be compelled to embark upon a new course if allied forces are to operate with them in projection missions outside Northeast Asia. Perhaps other measures can be envisioned. However, the central issue in preparing future U.S. overseas forces is not one of determining how can they be designed so that they can operate on their own. Instead, the issue is how they can be prepared to operate both on their own and in ways that pull allies and potential partners deeper into the power-projection task.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has asserted that to carry out the new U.S. defense strategy articulated in the QDR, a new strategic planning framework and design concept for overseas presence should be created. In particular, the future probably will require that U.S. overseas forces operate in outlying areas on behalf of peacetime environment-shaping goals, and that they work closely with allies and partners that are acquiring better capabilities for new missions. What are the consequences for the U.S. overseas force structure, including its future requirements and program priorities? The following chapter addresses this question.

---

## **TOWARD DIFFERENT AND BETTER FORCES**

---

The analysis presented in the previous chapters suggested that a strong U.S. overseas military presence will be needed for the coming era, but that it will need a new agenda incorporating different purposes and geography. The United States will probably place more emphasis on political and strategic purposes and less on threats and big wars. Moreover, U.S. forces likely will be operating more frequently outside their current defense perimeters in all three regions. What do these changes imply for the kind of U.S. forces that should be stationed abroad? How should the United States think about future requirements and force structure priorities for overseas presence? These questions are addressed in this chapter.

The analysis begins by discussing why it will be necessary to continue stationing large U.S. combat forces and manpower levels overseas, rather than adopting a far smaller posture dominated by C4ISR systems, support infrastructure, and reliance on reinforcement from CONUS. It then addresses force-sizing principles, including the reasons why current requirements for combat units and manpower make sense for today but not necessarily tomorrow. Next, it examines force-mix issues, including the reasons why the United States might strive to assemble a new overseas joint posture that provides a flexible portfolio of assets, and why it might come to rely more heavily on air and naval forces than it does today. It then analyzes how future overseas forces will be improved by modernization, reengineering, and the ongoing RMA. It then examines the important need to develop better infrastructure and prepositioning in outlying areas, including a network of air bases to which USAF forces can deploy. Finally, it addresses how these separate considerations add up to a

future of major departures in future force needs and priorities in the three theaters.

In its treatment of future forces, this chapter endeavors to strike a balance between continuity and change. The prospect of a still-dangerous and complex world mandates that the United States, as the sole remaining superpower, must project an image of constancy and purpose in all three theaters. Yet constancy and purpose do not translate into the conclusion that the U.S. overseas presence should remain set in concrete everywhere. Change can be an engine of renewal, and the only way to continue being effective. If change is to take place, however, it must be carried out wisely. The task therefore is to think innovatively in order to produce a future posture that is still effective. The following analysis argues that if wise decisions are taken, a new U.S. overseas posture may lie ahead: one that has different assets and capabilities than today, perhaps has somewhat less manpower but better weapons, and is better able to handle the emerging security agenda of tomorrow.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF “BEING THERE” WITH COMBAT FORCES**

The future U.S. posture abroad will need to include sizable combat forces, not just command staffs, support assets, and FMI outreach programs. Although other assets can perform important missions and, to some degree, substitute for combat forces, combat forces play important political and military roles of their own. As a result, they will be required as long as U.S. policy requires the exertion of military power on the international scene. These forces will remain an indispensable instrument for carrying out future U.S. national security policy in peace, crisis, and war.

An overseas presence completely lacking in permanently stationed combat forces can be imagined, and it should be evaluated to help illuminate the trade-offs and consequences. One benchmark is the idea of a “virtual presence” posture composed of C4ISR assets that, equipped with new technologies, provide command posts, intelligence, and information. These assets presumably would keep the United States not only on top of each regional situation, but also dominant in key functional areas. U.S. forces would be able to see, process, and decide quicker and better than adversaries, and this



information dominance could be shared with allies. When an emergency arises, U.S. combat forces could be deployed from CONUS—presumably fast enough owing to this information dominance and to DoD's excellent mobility forces.

To provide an option for assembling forces in an emergency, these C4ISR assets would be accompanied by a still-sizable overseas military infrastructure that allows for prompt reinforcement from CONUS. Periodically, some combat forces might rotate overseas for brief deployments in order to conduct on-site field exercises, train with allies, and visit other countries. But they would then return home. Power projection from CONUS would become the sole means by which DoD would mount military operations abroad and react to crises and wars.

This revolutionary idea rests on three propositions. First, information and decisionmaking will be hugely important in the coming years. Second, what matters is not having forces constantly present, but instead the capacity to react effectively by "getting there first with the most." Third, the combination of an adequate infrastructure and growing CONUS power-projection capabilities provides the ability to get there quickly. The principal attraction of this idea is that, in theory, it could lower the cost of overseas presence while preserving adequate response capabilities with a reduced and less-controversial posture.

How much money could be saved? The savings seem high—\$25 billion annually—if the withdrawn forces are deleted from the force structure. But these forces likely would not be deleted because they will still be needed for warfighting missions as part of the U.S. projection force from CONUS. Moreover, the act of moving large forces from overseas bases back to the United States can increase costs in the initial years, especially if new bases must be prepared to house them. Over the long haul, however, savings would be realized. Compared to the current overseas posture of 250,000 troops and an annual cost of \$15 billion, this virtual presence might require only 100,000 troops or less, and it might cost only about \$7 billion annually. An annual savings of \$8 billion could help DoD pay its mounting modernization costs in the coming decade—it would provide about 25 percent of the added procurement funds that are needed to buy new weapons. Thus, these savings seem attractive. But would these savings be real, or would they be offset by other expenses?

More important, would this posture work? Would it be effective in ways demanded by U.S. policy and strategy?

Although virtual presence might work in a tranquil world, a complex and still-dangerous world is another matter. In this world, virtual presence is flawed because it would provide a less-than-adequate overseas presence and/or a more costly one. There will still be valid cost-effective requirements for a significant number of combat forces in all three theaters. One reason is purely military; the other is political and strategic. Together, these reasons yield the conclusion that even if the overseas stationing of combat forces entails added costs, the expense will be merited by the large number of benefits gained.

Militarily, stationed forces greatly enhance the extent to which realistic exercises can be conducted and to which training with allies can be pursued. For example, two U.S. divisions stationed overseas can help train six allied divisions every year in large field training exercises, and a much larger number in small command post exercises. A rotational deployment by the same U.S. force likely could train only one-third of this number because it would be present on foreign soil for only limited periods. If an important U.S. goal will be to lead its allies into an outward-looking stance, U.S. forces will need to be present on a continuing basis to help prepare them for expeditionary missions. Rotational deployments by CONUS-based forces likely will not be adequate to foster this major innovation.

Moreover, rotational deployments impose huge strains on forces that must carry them out. A large portion of the entire U.S. posture might become so consumed in carrying them out that operational readiness suffers. A good example is the U.S. Navy's carrier force, which conducts rotational deployments in all three theaters. Virtually the entire force of 11 to 12 carriers must be committed to sustain three overseas-deployed carriers for 75 percent of the time. Those carriers that are not deployed at any given moment are either recovering from an earlier deployment or preparing for a future one. The same principle applies to the Marine Corps, whose three divisions are heavily involved in carrying out deployments to Okinawa and in ARGs. A similar shift by the Army and USAF to rotational deployments would have the same effect on their postures. The only way to avoid widespread disruption is to minimize rotational deployments,

but this reduces the amount of U.S. forces that are deployable overseas and the positive effects of having them there.

Forces stationed overseas can react quickly to surprise attacks and other crises that occur nearby or within easy reach. CONUS power projection takes longer—often significantly longer. The key constraint on speedy deployment is not manpower but instead supplies and equipment. For example, deployment of a heavy U.S. Army division and its support assets normally requires that about 300,000 tons of supplies and equipment be transported abroad. Even with help from the Civil Reserve Airlift Fleet, the United States can airlift only about 10,000 tons per day to a distant theater. Thus, a full month would be required to airlift a single division, and even longer for a larger force. This is not prompt enough to meet the early demands of a fast-breaking emergency.

Only air forces can deploy overseas in a matter of hours and days, and then only if they have an adequate infrastructure of prepared bases and facilities awaiting them. Ground and naval forces take far longer to deploy, normally weeks and even months. The deployment of ground forces could, however, be speeded by overseas prepositioning of equipment sets for the necessary forces. But this step would elevate costs because of the expense of buying not only storage warehouses and host-nation support but also a second set of CONUS-based equipment for the returning forces, plus bases and facilities for them. Also important, only about 85 percent of the equipment of an Army division can be economically prepositioned. As a result, extra strategic airlift would have to be purchased. For a full decade, the effect could be to eradicate one-half or more of the expected budget savings.

The idea of prepositioning Navy and Marine forces is even more out of the question (although expanded home-porting arrangements remain an intriguing possibility). How could DoD afford to buy the extra carriers, surface combatants, submarines, and amphibious ships needed to train sailors and Marines and otherwise to maintain operational readiness? Even discounting this impossibility, the larger negative implications for U.S. military strategy must be remembered. The DoD already spends about \$10 billion annually on strategic mobility assets. The result is an impressive ability to move ground and air forces overseas to all three theaters. But this projection capability is intended to supplement the large U.S. overseas pos-

ture with additional reinforcements, not to replace it. Indeed, overseas forces allow power projection to work by providing initial defense and reception facilities. If U.S. combat forces were withdrawn from their overseas locations, swift power projection may not be a viable option. Even if it were, large additional amounts would have to be spent on prepositioning and strategic mobility programs to compensate for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from overseas sites.

Thus, a full prepositioning effort involving all services likely would not result in savings, but instead could propel the DoD budget above its current level. In exchange, the United States would be left with an overseas presence consisting of only about 100,000 troops in command staffs and support billets, surrounded by large but silent stocks of weapons with nobody to operate them in peacetime. And naval forces still would have to be deployed abroad. Only air and ground forces could be true CONUS-based projection assets that employ prepositioning. Furthermore, even if ground forces were given prepositioned equipment, large numbers of them—especially armored and mechanized units—could be deployed only after a transportation period of some days and weeks: the amount of time needed to airlift personnel and equipment not stored overseas. In the interim, ground forces that would be available to deal with fast-breaking crises would be inadequate. Forces deployed overseas might also have to be moved to the location of a crisis. However, many of them will be closer to the event, often enough to make a critical difference by arriving quicker. Moreover, they will be more likely to know the local terrain and setting well enough to operate there effectively from the onset.

Whereas virtual presence thus falls short on military grounds, it fails even more on political and strategic grounds. As discussed earlier, the purpose of overseas presence goes beyond keeping the U.S. government informed and DoD capable of reacting to crises. The larger purpose is to help shape the political-military environment in peacetime. The constant presence of U.S. combat forces is critical to this goal. Above all, combat forces suggest a seriousness of purpose that exerts political influence among major countries everywhere. Combat forces help communicate the U.S. intention to defend important interests and its capability of doing so, thus influencing the actions of allies, coalition partners, and former adversaries. Indeed, the United States would be hard-pressed to preserve its cur-

rent senior positions in NATO and other alliance commands if sizable combat forces were not stationed abroad. Equally important, these forces help achieve the objective of preventing conflicts, including deterrence. They reassure allies, signal U.S. intentions to neutral parties, and warn adversaries. A virtual presence might be interpreted as a sign of political hesitancy and weakness rather than as a sign of a serious power-projection strategy.

Although virtual presence is not an all-encompassing theory for the future, it could play an important role by serving as a relatively inexpensive instrument by which the United States creates new defense capabilities in the outlying regions. It would thus provide intelligence, information, and decisionmaking assistance for regions in which U.S. military activity will be needed but in which future forces cannot be stationed full time. Virtual presence therefore can help transform the current U.S. overseas presence into a better instrument for regional power projection into zones where U.S. interests are growing.

Nevertheless, virtual presence should not be seen as a standalone solution to the overseas-presence requirement or as a viable substitute for combat forces. The act of influencing future world affairs is heavily dependent on "being there." The United States cannot "be there" with military units that merely witness events and report back to Washington. It can "be there" in a political and strategic sense only if it deploys sizable combat forces that are taken seriously by everyone.

## **FUTURE FORCE-SIZING PRINCIPLES**

How many U.S. troops should be stationed abroad, and what size and type of combat formations should constitute the global U.S. posture? What force-sizing principles should be applied to resolve these issues? What are the implications for thinking about future deployments of forces and manpower?

The U.S. government has made public commitments to sustain 100,000 troops in Europe and Asia for the foreseeable future. The number of 25,000 for troops in the Persian Gulf is on its way to acquiring a similar patina, even if these troops are formally labeled as temporarily on rotational duty. As a result, many governments are accepting these numbers as "litmus tests" of U.S. political sincerity

and regional military capability. Although such views deserve to be taken into account, it would be absurd for the United States to cling permanently to current deployments if conditions change in ways demanding different deployments. Eventually the United States would suffer a loss of credibility, because its steadfastness would come to be seen as narrow-minded, unresponsive behavior.

Foreign governments are mostly concerned about the quality of the U.S. strategic commitment to them, not the exact number of U.S. troops abroad. Provided the U.S. commitment remains intact and any changes are properly explained as adjustments to the demands of a new era and not simply reactions to falling budgets, the United States has the flexibility to pursue a different level if it makes strategic sense. A good example is the changes that have taken place in the U.S. military presence in Europe. During the Cold War, a U.S. presence of 330,000 troops was valid because this posture was needed to help carry out NATO's military strategy of forward defense and flexible response. But when the Cold War ended and the Warsaw Pact dissolved, this requirement came to an end. The new requirement was for a smaller U.S. posture that could help carry out NATO's new missions for the post-Cold War era. As a result, the U.S. presence dropped to 100,000 in a few years. The NATO allies accepted the change because they did not question the United States' continuing resolve or doubt that 100,000 troops was adequate to the new strategic task. The same principles that applied to Europe can thus apply elsewhere.

Just as political objections are sometimes raised to reducing U.S. forces even if they are no longer needed in specific places, a similar outcry often arises against the idea of elevating the U.S. troop presence in order to deal with a region that is becoming more endangered. The principal argument is that larger U.S. deployments will discomfort allies and inflame adversaries. However, the effect could be the opposite—stabilizing the situation by reassuring allies and deterring adversaries. The chief reason for deploying more U.S. troops is that continued reliance on the existing power-projection strategy from CONUS is no longer safe or effective. When this is the case, the benefits of a policy of increasing forces far outweigh the costs.

This study's conclusion is that reducing forces in some regions, increasing them in others, and reconfiguring them elsewhere can be

sensible responses to a world in flux. Indeed, a willingness to change can be the most intelligent stance. What matters is not the size of the U.S. presence but its appropriateness for the occasion. As a general rule, the United States should strive to limit the number of troops abroad, to reduce the strain on the defense budget and posture, and to encourage other countries to carry their fair share of the load. But the United States should also strive for adequacy, because a sound overseas presence is critical to the success of U.S. foreign policy and defense strategy. U.S. troop levels therefore should be determined by real-world strategic requirements, not by historical precedent or flawed political calculations.

Good planning uses a fourfold process that (1) determines the requirements posed by U.S. strategic purposes and the geopolitical situation; (2) selects the posture that best fulfills these requirements; (3) identifies the force units that should constitute this posture; and (4) calculates the manpower needed to operate these units. This is "top-down" planning based on strategic purposes and on a deductive logic that determines the means required to achieve specific ends. Although this planning is not oblivious to resource constraints, it is not so ruled by them that it fails to recognize the need for strategic change.

As discussed earlier, the United States will require a continuing overseas military presence that helps achieve three strategic objectives: promoting stability and integration, preventing conflict and war, and defeating aggression. To achieve these objectives, it will need sufficient forces for carrying out three strategy precepts: shaping the peacetime environment in favorable ways, responding to contingencies, and preparing for future changes through strategic adaptivity. To carry out these precepts, U.S. forces must be capable of performing an appropriate spectrum of missions in each theater in peace, crisis, and war. It is this cluster of objectives, precepts, and missions that provides a blueprint for sizing the U.S. overseas presence in each theater.

How many combat forces will be enough for these purposes? In general, two criteria seem appropriate for answering this question:

1. Commands that still face the threat of large, surprise attacks on vital interests will continue to need adequate combat forces to signal an unambiguous U.S. capability to defend against aggres-

sion and to carry out initial operations for the period before reinforcements can arrive. Essentially, requirements will continue to be threat-based.

2. Commands that no longer face this threat will need combat forces primarily for environment shaping but also for strategic adaptivity. That is, they will need enough forces to carry out exercises and training with allies, to meet the spectrum of emergencies that may arise under normal conditions, to underscore the U.S. commitment to defend U.S. and allied interests in these regions, and to be capable of adjusting to surprises.

Requirements for defending the old Cold War perimeter have already declined and may shrink further. The need to station enough forces to project military power into outlying areas, however, will likely have an offsetting effect. Accordingly, the required number of combat units should be treated as a variable that could go up or down as emphasis is shifted from threat-based planning to environment shaping and adaptivity. Although force needs for the latter two precepts will not approach requirements for defending against large threats, force needs for these precepts could be larger than requirements for defending against small threats. For example, ground-force needs in a single theater might be three divisions for environment shaping and adaptivity, compared to five divisions for countering a large threat and only one division for a small threat.

Future force needs therefore will depend on the specific situation in each region. If the key regions remain endangered by destabilizing dynamics, force needs for environment shaping and adaptivity likely will prove to be sizable even if direct threats disappear entirely. If so, they will bar the door not only to complete U.S. military withdrawal but also to steep reductions in posture. The fact that the United States has chosen to keep 100,000 troops in Europe, which does not face a direct threat but does confront potential instability, says a great deal about the potential effects of environment shaping and adaptivity on future overseas requirements for all theaters.

Assuming future requirements for environment shaping and adaptivity prove to be large, they do not have to be completely met by overseas-presence forces, for some can be handled by CONUS-based forces. A useful rule of thumb has been that in peacetime each major CINC will normally need about three divisions, four to five FWEs,



and two to three CVBGs and ARGs assigned to his or her command to shape the environment and to handle local crises. But only a portion of these forces must always be deployed overseas, provided the CINC can draw upon the remainder in an emergency.

In the past, this operational minimum has normally been defined in terms of Army divisions, USAF wings, and Navy CVBGs—the combat units that typically mount major operations for all three services. For example, the U.S. military commander in Korea has long insisted on having a U.S. Army division there. The U.S. commander in Europe has argued for an Army corps of two divisions, including four brigades. U.S. Navy commanders typically demand a CVBG on station most of the time for each maritime region. What unites these commanders is their practice of using these standard force units as a basis for describing overall requirements. In the future, this practice may change because modern weaponry is making potent forces out of the Army brigade, the USAF squadron, and the Navy task force of missile-carrying cruisers, destroyers, and amphibious ships. The principal tokens for force-sizing therefore may become smaller. For example, a brigade may become so potent for environment shaping that a division is not necessary. However, basic combat units likely will continue to provide important building blocks for determining U.S. force requirements in each theater.

If future environment-shaping needs can be met by a small handful of combat units, U.S. overseas manpower requirements will therefore be considerably lower than today. A more detailed appraisal, however, shows that this is not necessarily the case. The reason is that *handful* can mean several units, and each unit is larger than commonly realized when its directly attached support assets are taken into account. Equally important, U.S. planning for overseas presence is dominated by a deeply held norm: Each regional posture should be a “joint posture” that includes sizable assets for all three services, and that its combat forces must be backed up by higher-echelon support staffs that themselves are large. The combination of jointness and strong support assets is what makes the U.S. overseas posture strong in Europe and Asia. It is also what makes this posture large in manpower.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>For analysis of methodology for determining overseas presence manpower requirements, see Kugler (1992).

Table 5.1 displays normal manpower requirements for key combat units and their directly associated support assets. It suggests that individual combat units do not themselves pose high manpower requirements. An Army division includes only 16,500 personnel; a USAF wing, 5,000; and a Navy carrier, 5,000. However, the support assets immediately attached to these units elevate the totals. Thus, the Army division requires fully 34,000 personnel; the USAF wing, 7,000; and the Navy CVBG, 11,000. The totals mount even further when more than one combat unit must be deployed. Consequently, an appropriate regional posture normally will be fairly large in total manpower.

Combat units and associated support, moreover, are not the only significant users of manpower. A sensible regional posture will also include additional formations: command structures, higher-echelon support assets, and specialized capabilities. These formations can generate substantial manpower requirements even when only a few combat units are deployed. Indeed, the need to maintain a command structure can generate a large manpower requirement that is constant, not a variable; that is, a requirement that does not rise or fall appreciably as a function of the number of combat units deployed.

Future regional postures may be large, but their exact size is not predetermined, for the United States has a wide range of options at its disposal. Table 5.2 illustrates the manpower levels for alternative regional postures as a function of different combinations of combat units and C4ISR and support units. It does not address reengineering options that, as discussed below, could lower manpower

**Table 5.1**  
**Manpower Requirements for Combat Units**

Unit	Unit Manpower	Associated Support	Total
Army brigade	5,500	5,500	11,000
Army division	16,500	17,800	34,300
USAF fighter wing	5,000	2,000	7,000
USN CVBG	5,000	6,000	11,000
USMC ARG	2,500	4,500	8,000

**Table 5.2**  
**Alternative Regional Postures**

Combat Forces	C4ISR and Support Structures		
	Small	Medium	Large
1 FWE	17,000	37,000	77,000
1 brigade, 1 FWE	28,000	48,000	78,000
1 CVBG, 1 ARG	29,000	49,000	79,000
1 FWE, 1 CVBG, 1 ARG	36,000	56,000	86,000
1 brigade, 1 FWE, 1 CVBG, 1 ARG	47,000	67,000	97,000
1 brigade, 2 FWEs, 1 CVBG, 1 ARG	54,000	74,000	104,000
1 brigade, 3 FWEs, 1 CVBG, 1 ARG	61,000	81,000	111,000
1 division and 2 FWEs	57,000	77,000	107,000
1 division, 2 FWEs, 1 CVBG, 1 ARG	76,000	96,000	126,000
2 divisions, 3 FWEs, 1 CVBG, 1 ARG	116,000	136,000	161,000
3 divisions, 5 FWEs, 1 CVBG, 1 ARG	163,000	183,000	213,000

requirements for some units. On this chart, a “small” C4ISR and support structure has 10,000 personnel; a “medium” structure, 30,000 personnel; and a “large” structure, 60,000 personnel. A key point is that overseas-presence posture can come in many different varieties. Its size and composition is determined principally by decisions regarding its military units. These units perform missions, carry out precepts, and achieve objectives. The task of designing an overseas-presence posture therefore is one of determining units so that strategic purposes can be performed in effective ways. Manpower levels figure last in the calculus—after purposes and number of units have been established.

Table 5.2 helps illustrate not only the effects that combat forces and support structures have on elevating manpower requirements but also the need for having enough of both of them. In theory, the United States could deploy a large number of combat units at a low manpower level by having an austere support structure. Conversely, it could deploy a large support structure at the same manpower level by having few combat units. In both cases, however, the U.S. posture would be deficient, because either combat units or support structures would be lacking. Nonetheless, support needs are typically not so high that they prevent the deployment of several combat units. Steps have been taken in recent years to pare away surplus support assets. Support structures for mature theaters today fall into the

small-to-medium category. As a result, the United States is capable of deploying a robust mix of combat forces—ground, air, and naval units—in both Europe and Asia at manpower levels of 100,000 personnel in each theater.

The current plan of deploying 100,000 personnel in both Europe and Asia makes military sense for today's world, but choosing the future posture thus will mean making trade-offs and setting priorities. It also will mean weighing marginal returns, that is, determining the point at which requirements have been satisfactorily met and additional capabilities are not worth the added cost.

Even so, there are different plateaus of overseas-presence capability that help define the strategic alternatives facing future U.S. policy. A regional posture of 25,000 personnel would provide only a limited capability—for example, a small C4ISR and support structure and two combat units from one or two services, including only a brigade-sized ground presence. A posture of 50,000 personnel would provide either a medium C4ISR and support structure or three to four combat units, but not both, and again only a single ground brigade. A posture of 70,000–80,000 would permit a medium C4ISR and support structure, one brigade, one to three FWEs, and naval forces. Alternatively, this posture would allow for a full Army division, but only at the expense of having a smaller C4ISR and support structure. Either way, this is a minimum. As a result, a posture of 100,000 personnel will be needed to deploy a well-endowed joint presence. A smaller posture could easily be designed and may be feasible, but the key point is that capabilities regarded as important in today's world would be lost. Likewise, a larger posture of 163,000–213,000 personnel would be needed if the requirement is to have an operational capability for major warfighting missions, that is, an Army corps plus commensurate air and naval forces.

These plateaus illustrate clearly why the United States today deploys 100,000 personnel in both Europe and Asia. Even though these regions have radically different situations, they demand similar numbers of U.S. forces. The reason is that this number of personnel is needed to operate the multiple units that constitute a capable joint posture: C4ISR and support systems, one to two divisions, two to three FWEs, a CVBG, and an ARG. In the coming years, as discussed below, new technology and reengineering of force structures may

bring about reductions in the size of divisions, wings, and CVBGs. This may allow for trimming of the U.S. overseas presence without loss of combat units. Until then, a principal issue affecting U.S. troop strength abroad will be the requirement for ground forces. Fighter wings and CVBGs are not big consumers of manpower. By contrast, an Army division and its support assets require nearly 35,000 soldiers. The effect of deploying one or more Army divisions is to drive overall theater manpower requirements toward 100,000 and beyond. A parallel effect is that U.S. military capabilities in the theater increase greatly because ground forces bring important assets of their own—not only for warfighting, but also for environment shaping.

Regardless of how these trade-offs are judged, two conclusions stand out. First, ambitious strategic purposes require significant military capabilities, including joint combat forces, which in turn require sizable manpower levels. Second, the United States is not permanently locked into current force deployments. In fact, it has a broad range of choices at its disposal in each region, especially if regional conditions change in ways that alter the rationale for current deployments.

Some years from now, the United States may have fewer than 100,000 troops stationed in both Europe and Asia, and more than 25,000 troops deployed in the Persian Gulf. Even if the numbers in each theater are the same as now, the specific mix of combat and support forces there may be changed. Moreover, future U.S. forces will have new weapons that will alter their doctrine, and they almost certainly will be operating in different locations than they are now. This prospect may be troubling to those who argue that stasis is the best policy. But it will be welcomed by those who conclude that the U.S. overseas presence must change in response to shifting conditions.

#### **POSSIBLE PORTFOLIO POSTURE AND A CHANGING MIX**

The total force level for overseas presence will not be the only issue facing U.S. defense planning. Another important issue will be force mix: the number of ground, air, and naval units. Force mix is important because it affects the performance of the overseas posture. It can help make the difference between an effective and ineffective ability to perform missions, carry out precepts, and attain objectives.

Here again, the temptation may be strong to engage in linear thinking and continuity. But innovative thinking and change may be the better response. An altered force mix could provide a better capacity to pursue new strategic purposes on new geography.<sup>2</sup>

Planning is best advised to focus on the conceptual basics before assessing force-mix options. This is especially the case where threats are decreasing and environment shaping grows in importance. If worry over threats declines, a new and better concept might be that of assembling a "portfolio posture" that would provide a wide portfolio of capabilities. Although it would preserve a backup capacity to conduct a single, big wartime operation to protect against the unexpected, its chief feature would be its multiplicity and diversity of assets for performing many different peacetime and crisis missions in smaller ways.

Although a portfolio posture is not in widespread practice today, it is neither new nor revolutionary. All three services have been either conducting experiments on the idea or contemplating it for some of their forces.

A good analogy is a large corporation that maintains a diverse portfolio of stocks and bonds with multiple objectives in mind: liquidity, long-term growth, and high short-term profits. The concept of a portfolio posture would apply similar reasoning to the U.S. overseas presence. For example, Army forces in a single theater traditionally might be composed of two heavy divisions (totaling six armored and mechanized brigades) so that they can wage a corps-sized campaign against a well-armed opponent. However, although such a force would be excellent at performing its primary mission, it might be inhibited from performing other missions (such as PSOs or quick responses to distant emergencies). By contrast, a portfolio posture might include one armored brigade, one mechanized brigade, one light infantry brigade, one air assault brigade, one attack helicopter brigade, and one long-range fires (Multiple Launch Rocket System) brigade. This portfolio posture would have a much wider range of assets than the traditional force. It could not carry out a single, corps-sized warfighting campaign with equal effectiveness, but it

---

<sup>2</sup>For a broader analysis of force-sizing issues, see Davis and Kugler (1997).

could use its separate brigades to carry out six different operations in smaller, but significant ways. The consequence would be much greater flexibility and mission coverage—a desirable feature of a posture designed more for peacetime environment shaping and limited crisis interventions than for warfighting.

Moreover, a portfolio posture and a traditional posture are not mutually exclusive, even though they seem to be. Indeed, planning can aim at striking a healthy balance between them. In regions where traditional postures will still be needed to deal with threats, changes may be possible at the margins to develop somewhat greater flexibility and diversity. In theaters where environment shaping predominates, measures can be taken to ensure that the capacity exists to perform single, big missions. Likewise, U.S. power-projection forces from CONUS can be adjusted to ensure that overseas portfolio postures are backed by the reinforcement assets needed to attain a full warfighting capability. Often the goal will be neither a purely traditional posture nor a purely portfolio posture, but instead a healthy combination of the two.

A portfolio posture should not be embraced if the threat of major war still exists and the consequence would be a crippling loss of operational readiness. But in regions where threats have faded and peacetime purposes are foremost in mind, it could provide an opportunity to get more mileage out of the U.S. overseas presence than is possible now. Europe is a possible test case. Today, EUCOM has four heavy Army brigades. Would it be better off with a more diverse posture, not only for ground forces but also for air and naval forces? Will the attractiveness of a portfolio posture increase as new missions appear in the coming years? What applies to Europe may also eventually apply, to some degree, to Asia and even the Persian Gulf. A portfolio posture presents trade-offs and liabilities. But if CONUS-based forces can be relied upon to perform the big wartime operations, it may offer a useful approach to force planning for overseas presence in the coming era.

Regardless of whether or not the portfolio concept is adopted, an emphasis on “jointness” will remain important for two reasons:

1. U.S. military capabilities are normally strongest when forces from all three services are present and they work together as a team. This is especially the case when combat operations and crisis

interventions must be launched. The combination of ground, air, and naval forces is the best way to defeat opponents decisively.

2. Future environment-shaping missions seem likely to demand forces from all three services. U.S. leadership of alliances and training with coalition partners, for example, will require the continuing presence of U.S. ground, air, and naval forces. All three services should therefore continue being represented in the U.S. overseas presence.

Planning the future mix can begin by taking stock of the current overseas posture. The current posture is a joint posture, but its manpower is not equally balanced among the three forces. Ground forces (Army and Marines) make up about 50 percent of the total; air forces, about 30 percent; and naval forces, about 20 percent. This manpower distribution is mostly a consequence of decisions about combat units to deploy a total of about three division-equivalents, seven FWEs (USAF and Marine), and three CVBGs abroad. At issue is whether this particular mix of manpower and forces should continue or change as old threats fade and new environment-shaping missions rise to the fore. Any change almost inevitably will take the form of proportionately fewer ground forces and more air and naval forces, for reasons discussed previously.

A related issue is the degree to which change is feasible, given the constraints imposed by the overall U.S. force posture. Already today, about 15 percent of U.S. active military manpower is deployed abroad, but the combat formations of the three services are not equally affected. The Army deploys only 13 percent of its active maneuver brigades; the USAF, nearly 50 percent of its active fighter wings and 30 percent of its total combat posture; the Navy, 25 percent of its carriers; and the Marine Corps, 50 percent of its brigades and fighter wings. Although it appears that the Army is the service most capable of deploying more forces overseas, additional ground force deployments are the least likely deployments to be needed. Because of rotational constraints, the Navy and Marines cannot readily generate more overseas forces at their current size. If a requirement for more U.S. forces arises, it might take the form of additional air units. But the QDR's decision to limit USAF to 12 active fighter wings means that if more air units are deployed overseas, additional strains will be put on USAF's readiness by further reducing its already small CONUS-based posture of only six active



FWEs. Although USAF reserve wings can perform many missions, they cannot perform sustained overseas-presence functions.

For these reasons, future changes in overseas requirements could raise issues about the overall U.S. force posture endorsed by the Bottom-Up Review and QDR. If DoD continues to be equipped with an active posture of 13 ground divisions, 12 USAF FWEs, and 11 to 12 carriers, it will be constrained from generating more overseas deployments by any component—the Army because more ground deployments are unneeded, and the Navy, Marines, and Air Force because more deployments are hard to support. Additional air and naval deployments will likely require increases in the size of USAF and the Navy. But the consequence could be a smaller Army and fewer ground divisions unless these units are reengineered so that they can function with less manpower.

Short of painful reallocations or reengineering, DoD will be hard-pressed to alter the mix of current overseas forces by shifting emphasis toward more air and naval forces. This reality does not mean, however, that reductions as a result of fading threats must preserve the current mix at lower levels. Rather, reductions can focus on withdrawing ground units that are no longer needed while keeping current air and naval assets, and tailoring them for new missions. The effect could be to produce an altered mix of overseas-presence forces—one better suited to new purposes and geography.

The future force mix for overseas presence will depend partly on the requirements and priorities facing each service component. Deploying naval forces overseas, mostly in the form of CVBGs and ARGs, will probably remain a key component of overseas presence. The reason is that these forces play a central role in establishing the U.S. political and military presence in key ocean areas. They are widely regarded as critical to environment-shaping along littoral areas. They are mobile and flexible, and are not intrusive or provocative when on normal patrols. Also, they are effective tools for a variety of maritime and littoral contingencies ranging from limited interventions to crisis operations and initial defense. They have long been important in the Mediterranean and the Pacific. In recent years, they have come to play especially critical roles in the Persian Gulf, because political conditions there do not permit the deployment of large U.S. ground and air forces. In the Gulf today, naval forces are a backbone of U.S. defense strategy for crisis response and initial defense. As ocean

areas and critical sea lanes become more important in tomorrow's world, naval forces seem likely to preserve and enlarge upon their current role in the U.S. overseas presence.

Provided Navy and Marine forces are maintained at levels endorsed by the QDR, the current practice of deploying three CVBGs and three ARGs is unlikely to change. Because of their environment-shaping missions, these deployments probably will not decline even if current threats fade. However, barring a new naval threat, they probably will not increase even if international conditions worsen somewhat. U.S. naval strategy will continue relying on deployments from CONUS to meet "surge" requirements brought on by crises. The key uncertainty is that of optempo: the amount of time actually spent on station by these forces. Recent constraints on funding and force availability have eroded optempo to the point where these forces are now on station only about 75 percent of the time in each region. These constraints could increase in future years either because of budget limits or because of a failure to procure new ships as replacements for obsolescent models. Nonetheless, DoD's goal is to maintain the current optempo and, if possible, to improve upon it. Navy deployments will depend on whether the current CVBG force is maintained by procuring new carriers. If not, arsenal ships and missile-carrying surface combatants might form the core of new combat-capable task forces that would replace some CVBGs. The effect would be to keep naval overseas deployments at current levels, but with a different mix of ships.

The Army's future overseas deployment is less certain if threats continue to fade and nearby border defense missions become less important. One reason is that although overseas Army forces are excellent for stationary defense, they are less capable of rapidly deploying to outlying areas. Moreover, their ability to conduct intraregional deployments depends on the specific situation. For example, Army forces based in Germany can deploy to Poland quickly, but forces based in Korea cannot reach Southeast Asia with comparable speed. Their comparatively slower deployment rate in some situations could therefore be a reason for shifting emphasis toward air and naval forces, especially as projection missions become more important for overseas-presence forces. Likewise, even though Army forces play an important role in environment shaping, a large amount of manpower must be deployed to station a

few combat units abroad. The consequence is high visibility and controversy for these forces. Even though no plans exist to reduce the Army's four brigades in Europe, further progress toward stability there could raise questions about whether so many brigades will still be needed to perform peacetime missions. The Army's presence in Asia (and that of the Marines on Okinawa) will be even less certain if the Korea confrontation ends. Some Army and Marine forces will still be needed in Asia, but perhaps only one-half of the current amount. By contrast, a more dangerous Persian Gulf could require the permanent deployment of an Army brigade there if political conditions permit. Even so, total Army and Marine deployments may be headed downward in future years.

Regardless of the number of Army combat units stationed overseas, an issue affecting their internal structure will include the merits and demerits of making them lighter (that is, less dominated by armor). Because armored and mechanized units are so heavy and ponderous, critics often call for reconfiguring the Army's overseas presence to light infantry or air assault forces. These lighter forces presumably would be more mobile and agile, and therefore better able to carry out future overseas projection missions. However, this argument ignores the critical difference between strategic mobility (moving forces to the battlefield) and tactical mobility (moving forces on the battlefield).

Because they are lighter, infantry units have greater strategic mobility than armored units. They can be moved quicker across long distances, thereby arriving sooner on the battlefield. The problem is that they lack tactical mobility once they arrive because they do not possess the tanks, infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), self-propelled artillery, and other vehicles needed for maneuver units to move cross-country quickly. Infantry can be given tactical mobility by equipping it with assault helicopters, but it still will lack the firepower provided by tanks and IFVs that can be crucial to winning engagements and related operations. Therefore, because adequate combat capabilities are needed once ground forces arrive on the battlefield, reconfiguring the Army's overseas presence wholly to light infantry or air assault forces is not a valid idea.

What will be required is a better balance between heavy and light forces overseas, so that an adequate combination of strategic mobil-

ity and tactical mobility is achieved in all theaters. Currently, the Army has four heavy brigades in Europe but no light forces. In Asia, by contrast, the Army and Marines have four brigades, mixed between light and armored mechanized units. A shift toward some light forces in Europe may thus make sense in the future. The Army could also reduce its strategic mobility problem by making its armored and mechanized forces lighter. Today, an Army heavy division weighs about 110,000 tons, as compared to the 25,000–50,000 tons of a light division. Moreover, a heavy division's CS/CSS assets weigh 150,000 tons, and its ammunition and supplies weigh another 50,000 tons. The result is a combat force that can be transported only through a massive combination of rail, airlift, and/or sealift. If the Army could create a new division that still has sufficient heavy weapons but weighs less (for example, 75,000 tons), its problem of being unable to move heavy forces would be lessened. Such a division might be ideal for overseas-presence missions in the coming era. Some reductions are planned for Army heavy divisions, but not by this amount.

USAF forces appear well-situated to play roles of growing importance in the coming years. Both agile and well-armed, USAF forces, more than any of the other services, can project power over long distances quickly when bases and infrastructure are available to receive them. USAF forces also can carry out a wide variety of operational missions, both continental and maritime, and are relevant for most potential crises and wars. Desert Storm showed the extent to which USAF forces can now penetrate air defenses with few losses and destroy ground targets very effectively. Although modern U.S. airpower cannot win most wars by itself, it is achieving objectives envisioned by its original theorists. The growing importance of deep-strike operations in military doctrine further enhances the attractiveness of USAF forces in the overseas-presence role. And as reliance on space-based systems increases, USAF's role will grow even further.

USAF forces are also important to U.S. policies for alliances and coalitions. Because of their high technology in C4ISR assets and combat forces, they often can make special, high-leverage contributions to allied forces, which typically have large armies but weaker air forces. They especially contribute in missions of air superiority, strategic bombardment, and close air support—important missions often not performed by allied forces. They also are effective for

sending political signals of U.S. resolve because of their growing reputation for combat effectiveness, while often being less visible and controversial than ground forces. In addition, by virtue of their capability to move quickly from one country to the next, they are effective at developing integrative ties and partnership relations with new allies and friends. These characteristics make USAF forces attractive for environment shaping, crisis response, and adaptation in the future.

Moreover, USAF forces are fungible because they can perform several ground and air missions that have traditionally been handled by the Army and Navy. The combination of Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) and fighter bombers with smart munitions provides a lethal capacity to halt and destroy enemy ground invasions when U.S. ground forces are not on the scene. USAF forces also can perform some sea patrol and maritime defense missions normally handled by Navy CVBGs. The Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft provide excellent surveillance assets, USAF interceptors can defend large expanses of maritime airspace, and USAF fighter bombers can be used to attack enemy ships and port facilities. This is not to say that USAF forces are a substitute for naval forces: For example, they cannot perform antisubmarine warfare, engage in escort or surface combat, or support amphibious assault missions with equal effectiveness. Nor are they a true "blue-water" force because they cannot easily operate for extended periods at long ranges beyond their land bases. But for maritime missions along coastal areas, they can often "pinch-hit" for naval forces that have not yet arrived on the scene. If the Navy's CVBG posture declines in future years, USAF forces can help perform the maritime air missions left uncovered by the decline.

Current requirements for USAF deployments seem unlikely to diminish. The USAF posture of 2.3 FWEs in Europe is not likely to be reduced, because NATO's future strategy for its enlarged security perimeter will probably emphasize airpower. In Asia, the current USAF posture of 2.6 FWEs may no longer be fully needed to help defend Korea and Japan, but it likely will be needed to assist in growing U.S. security involvements in Southeast Asia. The current Persian Gulf deployment of one FWE seems unlikely to diminish. Thus, USAF overseas deployments are not headed downward.

To the contrary, these deployments could be headed upward. This trend is due to the new missions and geography ahead, and to the important role of air forces in mounting an appropriate response. Consequently, current limitations on the USAF's posture could become a strategic liability. Perhaps a USAF posture of 20 FWEs is enough to fight two MTWs, but a force of only 12 active wings provides little room for additional overseas deployments. For example, deployment of only two more wings abroad would mean that about 66 percent of USAF's active combat forces are stationed overseas—too many for even adept rotational policies. If additional USAF wings cannot be created, an appropriate response would be to increase the active posture—perhaps to 14–16 wings—while reducing reserve forces.

Regardless of the total numbers, USAF's overseas-presence forces will require a mix of diverse assets similar to that of today: combat aircraft for air superiority and ground attack missions, reconnaissance and electronic warfare aircraft, AWACS and JSTARS, transports, tankers, and other support aircraft. In the future, USAF forces stationed overseas may be performing long-distance projection missions in formations smaller than the standard wing of 72 aircraft. Moreover, specific requirements may change from one mission to the next. As a result, USAF seems best advised to continue developing flexibly constructed units for deployments, such as the air expeditionary force concept. Such a squadron-sized formation might include, for example, six F-15Cs, six F-15Es, six F-16s, AWACS and JSTARS aircraft, a few tankers, and specialized support assets. Flexibility of this sort could enhance USAF's capacity to perform the wide range of new overseas missions that lie ahead. The implications for the future force mix of the U.S. overseas presence can be summarized as follows:

- Naval and afloat amphibious forces
  - Equal or greater overseas deployments are likely to be needed.
  - Operations will be conducted in new areas.
  - New technologies may permit new force structures.
- Ground forces
  - Deployed force needs may decline if threats fade.

- The requirement will be for prompt outward deployment.
- New technologies and new missions may create a need for altered structures.
- Air forces
  - Equal or greater deployments are likely to be needed.
  - The premium will be on the air defenses and deep strike assets.
  - Air base infrastructure is needed for outward projection.

Thus, the emerging trends suggest that a different force mix may lie ahead for the U.S. overseas presence. Provided threats decline, the future seems pointed toward fewer ground forces, a similar number of naval forces but different ships, and perhaps a larger number of air forces. All told, the effect could be to reduce U.S. overseas manpower somewhat. But the new posture will still be a joint posture with better C4ISR assets than today's, and it will be quite capable in military terms. Moreover, it will be better able than the current posture to carry out new U.S. strategic purposes in new geographic locations. Above all, it will be good at environment shaping and at adapting effectively to surprising developments. But more is involved in building this posture than identifying the likely mix of combat forces and their support units. Equally important will be the development of new technologies, the associated reengineering of some units, and the development of a better military infrastructure in outlying areas. These subjects are addressed below.

## **TOWARD HIGHER-QUALITY, REENGINEERED FORCES**

An important trend of the coming decade is that U.S. forces will be improving in quality because of the ongoing RMA—new doctrine, information systems, weapons and munitions, and reengineering of logistics and combat structures. These improvements are aimed at upgrading the entire U.S. defense posture, but they will also affect overseas forces in important ways. Planning for the future overseas presence must take these changes into account, for their effects will be multifaceted. Although the changes may not fundamentally alter future requirements for overseas presence over the next two decades, they will lead to significant changes in the weapons and structures of U.S. forces stationed abroad. They also will have broader military

and political consequences. They will enhance prospects for performing overseas-presence missions and attaining U.S. strategic goals, perhaps with less manpower than is the case now.

### **Impact of RMA**

It is important to recognize that the effort to increase U.S. military capabilities through quality enhancements is not new. In fact, it began about 20 years ago. During the Cold War's last decade, major strides were made in improving quality so that U.S. forces could overcome quantitative inferiority to the enemy so they could fight outnumbered and still win. The origin was the NATO-Warsaw Pact balance in Central Europe, where U.S. and NATO forces were faced with permanent inferiority in numbers and therefore had no choice but to turn to quality. This effort was aided by an accelerating modernization program that was producing a new generation of weapons. As a result, U.S. forces pioneered increases in joint operations and readiness, integrated theater air defenses, enhanced deliverable firepower, nonlinear doctrines emphasizing maneuver, fast battlefield mobility, deep-strike concepts, and mastery of the operational art. This effort bore fruit not only in Europe, but also in the Persian Gulf War. That war's successful outcome, in turn, led to efforts to consolidate the gains and to think about how future technological gains in information processing could enhance U.S. military capabilities. These improvements set the stage for further developments.

As outlined in the QDR and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's "Joint Vision 2010," future U.S. military doctrine focuses on using information superiority and technological advances in weapons and other systems to achieve higher levels of combat effectiveness in joint operations. The goal of information superiority is to develop much greater awareness of the battlefield to foster more efficient use of U.S. forces while denying this awareness to enemy forces. By developing new technologies and systems that provide this information superiority, DoD aspires to create a new C4ISR architecture made up of five components:

- A robust multisensor information grid that provides detailed, real-time knowledge of the battlefield to great depth (for example, 200 kilometers in the enemy's rear areas)



- Advanced battle-management capabilities that permit faster and more flexible employment of U.S. forces than can be achieved by the enemy
- Capabilities that frustrate the enemy's ability to gain battlefield awareness and to use his forces with comparable effectiveness
- A sophisticated communications grid that permits the rapid flow of high volumes of information across the entire U.S. command structure
- Defensive systems that prevent the enemy from disrupting U.S. efforts to gain information dominance.

This C4ISR architecture and information "system of systems" is intended to help facilitate the pursuit of four new operational concepts:

- **Dominant Maneuver.** This concept aims at developing improved capabilities to move, position, and use both mass and firepower with greater effectiveness. The goal is to allow U.S. forces to dominate the important battlefield dynamic of concentrating and counterconcentrating so that U.S. forces have local superiority in critical engagements even if they are matched or outnumbered in the theater of operations. Moreover, netted firepower and joint operations at low echelons are intended to further enhance U.S. capabilities in this arena.
- **Precision Engagement.** Whereas dominant maneuver focuses on getting forces to the right place at the right time on the battlefield, this concept focuses on enhancing their lethality while upgrading their survivability. The goal is to develop a synergistic combination of target acquisition and fire control systems, delivery platforms, and smart munitions so that enemy forces can be destroyed quickly and effectively, with minimum losses to U.S. forces. Although this concept includes short-range targeting, it focuses especially on deep-strike systems that allow for destruction of enemy forces in rear areas.
- **Full-Dimensional Protection.** This concept focuses on developing improved defense systems to handle the wide variety of attacks against U.S. forces that a well-equipped enemy might launch. For peacetime, the concept addresses protection from

terrorism. For wartime, although it addresses defense against conventional systems, such as air and missile bombardment, it also includes protection from WMD.

- **Focused Logistics.** This concept aims at enhancing the capacity to deliver tailored logistics packages in timely ways so that U.S. forces are better sustained. It recognizes that the ability to promptly deliver vital supplies to engaged forces is often more important than amassing a huge inventory of theater stocks. It also addresses situations in which the enemy is trying to interdict U.S. resupply efforts or where a full buildup of U.S. theater logistics forces has not been possible.

Emerging U.S. military doctrine thus focuses on developing a combination of improvements in C4ISR and information dominance, battlefield maneuver, lethal targeting, defensive protection, and logistics support. DoD not only wants to maintain the current superiority of U.S. forces over potential opponents, but also wants U.S. forces to become so superior that they will be able to win virtually all future conflicts quickly, decisively, and with few losses. Critics wonder whether the effects will be this profound, and point out that enemies may develop new strategies and forces that dilute the gains. Even so, the issue is not whether these concepts will improve U.S. capabilities, but the degree to which improvements will be realized. For any gains to be made, however, the necessary systems must be procured, and the necessary changes to doctrine and force structures must be carried out. Because funding and R&D advances are uncertain, RMA is best viewed as a long-term process that will not be completed until 2015 or later.

The QDR plan is best seen as a middle-ground compromise between two competing investment strategies. The first strategy focuses on maintaining high readiness and a large force structure for the near term, while using available funds to modernize slowly by acquiring soon-available weapon systems. The second strategy is the opposite. It calls for steep force cuts and forsaking of most weapons now in the production pipeline so that funds can be invested in exotic-technology RMA systems that presumably will become available after 2010. The middle-ground strategy chosen by the QDR calls for modest manpower cuts and slimming of domestic infrastructure so that weapons can be procured that will be available in the coming

decade, while leaving open the option of pursuing new RMA systems in the following decade. Critics are complaining that the distant future is being mortgaged, but the immediate consequence is that steady progress in improving U.S. forces likely will be made over the next decade, and this will have a positive impact on the U.S. overseas presence.

This progress will be heavily influenced by a modernization program that is already acquiring new weapons and upgrades. In the coming years, the Army will acquire digitized systems, the Comanche attack helicopter, the Crusader artillery system, upgrades to the Abrams tank and Bradley IFV, and better munitions in the form of the Army Tactical Missile System and Brilliant Anti-Tank munitions, the Sense and Destroy Armor Munition, and Javelin. The Air Force will acquire the F-22, the Joint Strike Fighter, upgrades to AWACS and JSTARS, improved unmanned aerial vehicles, and better munitions in the form of Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles, the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile, the Joint Standoff Weapon, the Joint Direct Attack Munition, and the Sensor Fuzed Weapon or Skeet. The Navy's shipbuilding program is moderate, but the Navy will acquire F-18E fighters, better cruise missiles and munitions, V-22 (Osprey) aircraft, and new amphibious assault ships for the Marines. Although these modernization programs will enhance the ability of U.S. forces to carry out all of the new doctrinal concepts, they will especially improve capabilities for long-range fires. This modernization effort is only beginning to get under way, but by 2005 most of the weapon systems will be in production. By 2010, U.S. forces therefore will be better able not only to fight close battles but also to carry out deep-strike missions. An important goal is to strengthen their capability to halt invasions in the early stages, thus setting the stage for successful force buildups and counterattacks.

### **Implications for Overseas Presence**

Over the past decade, U.S. overseas forces have not been affected much by modernization, but this pattern will start changing in the coming years. The new wave of modernization and associated changes in doctrine will enhance the capability of U.S. overseas forces to carry out their missions in several ways. It probably will strengthen their ability to deter aggression and to conduct initial

defense operations if war occurs. It will provide U.S. forces an opportunity to exert greater leadership over alliances and coalitions by showing the way to new doctrines, weapon systems, and deep-fire concepts. Moreover, it should enhance their capacity to develop partnership relations with countries interested in learning about new U.S. military thinking. In general, modernization will enhance the prestige of U.S. military forces, thus making the political dimension of overseas presence easier to carry out.

There are, however, three potential downsides to this modernization and associated RMA measures. The least-important downside is that the arrival of new U.S. weapons overseas will require some changes to facilities and host-nation accords, thereby touching off new negotiations with local governments over bases and other arrangements. More important is the impact on coalition practices. Unless intensified training and exercises with allies are pursued, modernization may open up a greater qualitative gap between U.S. and allied forces, thus making coalition operations harder to mount. In addition, adversaries and rivals may accuse the United States of pursuing a high-technology form of global hegemony. If these problems can be overcome, however, the overall military and political consequences will probably be beneficial for the U.S. overseas presence.

Less clear is whether RMA and modernization will make U.S. forces so superior that they can easily brush aside future adversaries in all future wars, as some RMA advocates are hoping. Although U.S. forces will be improving, adversaries will be developing better technology and forces of their own and aspiring to find other ways to dilute U.S. advantages. U.S. forces will retain or increase their advantages in future wars that resemble Desert Storm, but different wars driven by dissimilar dynamics may be another matter. For example, RMA may not be a solution to conflicts fought in jungles, forests, and cities. Moreover, much will depend on the readiness and morale of U.S. forces and on the political conditions that surround future conflicts. Perhaps the safest conclusion is that RMA and modernization are reasons for optimism but not for complacency. U.S. overseas forces will be better able to perform many initial defense missions, but not necessarily all of them, and not in ways that lessen their priority for readiness.

A similarly prudent judgment applies to the probable effects on overall force requirements for the U.S. overseas presence. New tech-

nology and doctrine will enhance the capacity of U.S. forces to perform their missions more effectively, but they cannot be expected to become a substitute for adequate forces. Moreover, RMA and modernization do little to enhance the U.S. ability to project military forces across long distances. U.S. strategic mobility forces are scheduled for only modest increases, so that future CONUS-based forces will not be able to deploy abroad much faster than today. Equally important, overseas forces will not be able to operate far beyond their current bases much better than today.

An important issue for overseas priorities will be the extent to which RMA and modernization lead to reengineering of U.S. combat forces structures, not only at home but also abroad. Some proponents of RMA are envisioning quite major changes in force structures, including reliance on C4ISR and deep-fire systems in ways that lead to the removal of most tanks, IFVs, and short-range weapons from Army combat forces. A related vision is the virtual disappearance of Navy carriers, which would be replaced by arsenal ships, big submarines, and other vessels carrying cruise missiles. The most visionary change is a wholesale downgrading of ground forces in favor of a new U.S. defense posture composed mostly of air and naval forces. Because of the more prudent thinking of DoD and the services, sweeping changes of this magnitude seem unlikely over the next two decades. More probable are modest changes aimed at acquiring more C4ISR systems and deep-fire units, but not in ways that radically alter current force structures. For example, the Army may de-emphasize divisions in favor of corps and brigades, and it may convert some forces to lighter configurations, but it is unlikely to abandon its current heavy units. The same principle applies to Navy carriers—their precise number in the future is uncertain, but several will still be operating 10–20 years from now.

Therefore, the real issue is the manner in which a moderate yet evolutionary reengineering will be done. Reengineering aims to substitute technology for labor, thereby lessening manpower requirements. The exact degree of lessening remains to be seen. The three services are already conducting experiments on new RMA force structures, and these experiments will give useful insights over the next few years. After that, more information will become available as new RMA technologies are introduced and new structures are adopted. The final conclusion will not be known for several years.

For now, this study concludes that although RMA and reengineering will probably not result in a massive reduction in manpower requirements, they may produce marginal reductions of 10 to 20 percent to maintain any constant level of capability. If so, this change could affect manpower planning for all U.S. forces and for the overseas presence.

The principal effect of this reengineering could be to allow DoD to keep the current number of combat formations for all three services, even if active-duty manpower is reduced below existing levels. Otherwise, reductions in the QDR force might be necessary if DoD manpower drops, and this trend could produce pressures to reduce the U.S. overseas presence. Likewise, reengineering by substituting capital for labor might permit some trimming of overseas-presence manpower, while keeping combat force levels at current or desired levels. For example, an average 15 percent reduction in manpower for all units could result in a decrease of troop levels in Europe and Asia from 100,000 to 85,000 without any change in U.S. defense commitments to either region. Conversely, reengineering could permit DoD to deploy more combat forces and support assets at current manpower levels. For example, USAF deployments could rise from six FWEs today to seven FWEs a few years from now. The same outcome could apply to the Army and Navy. Regardless of how changes are manifested, however, they point toward greater efficiency in the use of U.S. military manpower overseas. Although they would stem from internal DoD practices, their political and strategic consequences would have to be factored into U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy.

## **MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR OUTLYING AREAS**

As discussed above, RMA and reengineering will do little to remedy a principal impediment to the current U.S. overseas presence: its inability to project power into outlying regions. Better-quality U.S. forces will matter little if they cannot operate in the new geographic zones. Better military infrastructure therefore need to be developed in these outlying areas. Future directions are needed for the other aspects of overseas presence: prepositioning, FMIs, and security assistance. Continued progress in all of these areas will be necessary if the United States is to gain maximum strategic advantages from its

future overseas presence. The challenge is to make sure that sufficient funds are made available and that the correct priorities are pursued.

### **Importance of New Reception Facilities and Bases**

A logical response to the geographic enlargement of the U.S. security perimeter would seem to be the permanent stationing of forces in new zones. In Europe, for example, some U.S. forces could be moved from their current bases, mostly in Germany and Britain, to new permanent bases in the CEE and the Mediterranean regions. In Asia, some U.S. forces could move from their current bases in Korea and Japan to new locations in Southeast Asia. However, these moves are not a primary solution to the new-geography problem. Although some steps in this direction can be anticipated, important constraints bar major steps:

1. Political constraints. Permanent stationing of large U.S. forces in these zones could be too controversial because, for example, both Russia and China would probably object. Other countries also might not be enthused at the prospect or willing to share the costs.
2. Practical constraints. Some new basing locations might not be readily accessible to resupply from CONUS, and U.S. forces might not have access to areas where they can conduct training and exercises.
3. Financial constraints. Big new bases cost large amounts of money. For example, a new air base can cost \$500 million or more, and a brigade-sized Army base or a naval port can cost more. In addition, training sites and storage facilities can be nearly as expensive. The DoD is unlikely to be able to devote that amount of money in the short time span of a few years. Any switch to permanent stationing of U.S. forces in new zones is therefore likely to be slow in pace and modest in scope.

The practical alternative is to develop reception facilities, bases, prepositioned assets, and associated infrastructure in the new geographic locations so that U.S. forces can deploy there temporarily when needed. This practice has been employed in the Persian Gulf,

and so far, it has worked as a substitute for having U.S. forces permanently deployed there. The initial Persian Gulf effort focused on developing bases and facilities for U.S. military visits and exercises with host-country forces. Later it was expanded to include military infrastructure for larger U.S. force deployments, including reinforcement in a major contingency. Over a period of years, U.S. forces gradually acquired the infrastructure to mount major operations in Saudi Arabia and the GCC states. A similar plan and program could be developed for Europe and Asia, to the extent circumstances permit.

Furthermore, military assets for projection operations do not have to be as well-developed as main operating bases. Indeed, austere bases and facilities will often suffice as long as they are serviceable. What U.S. forces will require is bases, facilities, and infrastructure that can temporarily support deployments. Where space exists, moreover, U.S. forces can use bases and facilities already owned and operated by host-nation forces. Financial arrangements can be developed whereby the costs of improving the local military infrastructure are shared with the host nations, which, in turn, will benefit from the measures. These are some of the ways the costs of repositioning can be lowered. Additional funds would be needed for increasing the optempo of U.S. forces so that they could deploy to new bases for periodic training with new allies and partners, but this cost would be a fraction of that already being paid for deploying U.S. forces abroad.

Political considerations will have a major influence on steps that are desirable and possible in Europe. A purely military perspective, however, suggests that the United States should try to create a network of reception bases and facilities that stretches along the strategic arc from the Baltic Sea to Turkey. Thus, naval facilities could be established or enhanced in Poland and nearby Nordic countries, as well as along Turkey's coastline. Ground and air facilities, as well as prepositioned stocks, could be established in such countries as Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania. In addition, existing facilities in Turkey could be upgraded. NATO programs for enlargement and development of common infrastructure will assist in this endeavor to some degree, but U.S. programs will also be needed. Moreover, if conditions permit, similar programs could permit U.S. forces to operate more effectively in North Africa and the Middle East.



Similar measures could also be taken in Asia. Although the United States once had a large network of bases along the vast arc stretching from Okinawa to Thailand, it is now mostly gone. Withdrawal from Vietnam and Thailand in the 1970s and especially from the Philippines in the 1980s left the United States without any major military presence in Southeast Asia. Because U.S. forces may again be required to operate along this arc with growing frequency, sufficient bases, facilities, and infrastructure will be needed to carry out the necessary operations. Initial steps in this direction already have begun, but more measures will probably be needed. The most pressing requirement will be for facilities to support U.S. air and naval deployments. Therefore, development of a USAF network of Deployment Operating Bases (DOBs), plus foreign ports capable of servicing U.S. ships, makes sense. If ground deployments become attractive, appropriate bases and facilities could also be developed. From a military perspective, candidate countries include Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand. Political considerations, however, will play an important role in determining which sites are chosen.

FMI measures and security assistance could also accompany these efforts to establish reception facilities and bases in outlying regions. FMI includes such disparate measures as International Military Education and Training (education of foreign officers), visitations and port calls, training and exercises, partnership-building activities, and various other initiatives sponsored by the CINCs. These measures are important tools for U.S. overseas presence and are low in cost: about \$250 million annually. Currently, however, they are funded at about one-half the level of what may be preferred by the CINCs in the coming years. Security assistance comes in a variety of forms, including grants, low-cost transfers of excess articles, direct purchases of U.S. military equipment, and government-backed loans for acquiring commercial products. The common purpose of this assistance is to help improve the forces of friends and allies so that they can defend themselves, thus lowering their dependence on U.S. forces. Most of this assistance is given to countries that lack the financial resources needed to buy modern weapons on the international market. Currently, the annual U.S. security assistance budget is about \$5 billion—roughly one-half that of Cold War levels. Much of this assistance goes to four countries: Israel, Egypt, Greece, and

Turkey. If other worthy countries (such as NATO's new members) are to receive aid, the security assistance budget will have to be increased or reallocated.

A combination of the following possible measures would greatly strengthen the capacity of U.S. overseas forces to carry out new missions in outlying regions across all three theaters:

- DOBs owned by the allies
- Ground reception facilities and training areas
- Allied naval bases capable of repairing and refurbishing U.S. naval forces
- Funding for optempo
- FMI measures (e.g., IMET, partnership activities, visitations)
- Security assistance.

By 2010, U.S. forces would acquire a much better network of bases, facilities, and infrastructure to deploy into new geographic locations. They also would acquire funds to support a higher optempo there. In addition, they would be better able to develop close military ties with new allies, friends, and partners. The benefits would be both political and military, and they would be realized in peacetime, as well as during crises and wars. In these outlying locations, U.S. overseas forces probably would be able to do a far better job than they do now of shaping the peacetime environment, responding to contingencies, and adapting to surprises. As a result, U.S. policy would attain greater success at promoting integration and stability, preventing conflict, controlling crises, deterring aggression, and winning the wars that must be fought.

How much would these measures cost? A crude estimate for an adequate network of new bases, facilities, and infrastructure in the three theaters is about \$5 billion to \$10 billion or more through 2010. FMI increases might cost about \$3 billion to \$5 billion for the same period. Additional security assistance in the form of grants and sales of excess articles (excluding repaid loans) could cost about \$5 billion to \$10 billion. In addition, optempo costs for U.S. forces in all three theaters could rise about \$1 billion a year. The total costs thus could be about \$25 billion to \$40 billion through 2010. This amount

equates to an average annual increase of \$2 billion to \$3 billion, or about 15 percent to 25 percent above current DoD outlays for overseas presence.

The key conclusion, however, is that a new and more effective overseas presence will cost more than it does today. The amount of increase is moderate—only 1 percent to 1.5 percent of the U.S. defense budget—but it is not trivial, because of competing DoD priorities. The choice boils down to a trade-off between improving U.S. forces and developing better power projection in all three theaters. Stronger U.S. forces are important, but better power projection may help reduce the likelihood of conflict and war.

Can financial offsets be found? If reengineering of combat and logistics structures results in a 10 percent to 15 percent decline in overseas manpower requirements, annual savings of \$300 million to \$750 million might be realized. Also, allied governments might be persuaded to increase their support of the U.S. overseas presence. Today, these governments are making offset payments of about \$8 billion annually: \$6 billion from Japan, \$1.4 billion from NATO countries, and the remainder from Persian Gulf countries. If these contributions could be increased by 5 percent to 10 percent, additional annual savings of \$400 billion to \$800 million might be realized. Another possibility is to use NATO common infrastructure funds for a portion of U.S. investments in Eastern Europe to generate savings of \$150 million to \$300 million annually. These three offsets could therefore provide a total savings of \$850 million to \$1.850 billion—enough to cover nearly 50 percent of the added expense for power-projection measures. Moreover, settlement of the Korean confrontation could result in withdrawal of some U.S. forces from Asia, thus producing additional annual savings of about \$1 billion to \$2 billion. Total savings would then rise to 80 percent to 100 percent of the expense for projection measures. U.S. overseas forces thus could acquire a better capacity to project power into the outlying regions at little or no net increase in the current cost of deploying these forces abroad.

The key conclusion is that these measures are affordable. The larger issue is whether international political support can be found for this strategic departure. The odds seem highest in Europe, where NATO enlargement will create strong incentives for the alliance to develop a

reception infrastructure in the CEE region—a step that will be welcomed by NATO's new members and is not prevented by the NATO–Russian Founding Act, which permits defensive infrastructure preparations. Of the three theaters, prospects for building a better U.S. military infrastructure seem dimmest in the Middle East and Persian Gulf. Nonetheless, some pro-Western Arab governments, such as Egypt, might see value in various measures if their own security is upgraded. In Asia, prospects will depend heavily on future regional dynamics. Taiwan would welcome U.S. reception facilities on its soil, but its strained relations with China may make this step unwise. The Philippines seem to be warming to the idea of restored military ties with the United States; cost-sharing issues may be the key. In Southeast Asia, reactions would depend heavily on the security agendas of the various countries and on their perceptions of China's intentions. However, several countries are already starting to work with U.S. forces in low-profile ways. If they become more concerned about their security and more worried about China as well as their region's lack of a collective security structure, they might become receptive to the idea of a stronger U.S. capacity to project military power into their region.

Thus, attitudes vary among the three theaters. Closer ties to U.S. military forces could bring controversy, but they could also yield greater security and stronger national forces. For the United States, the trade-off is balancing greater entanglements against higher leverage over regional security affairs.

#### **AN INNOVATIVE IDEA: NEW USAF DEPLOYMENT BASES**

The military advantages of a better overseas infrastructure can be illustrated by discussing an idea that offers great promise: developing a network of air bases for temporary deployments in outlying regions to enhance USAF power-projection capabilities. USAF overseas forces are now stationed at bases within the existing security perimeter in all three theaters. However, their capacity to project power is limited by their flying range: normally about 400–500 miles for fighter aircraft, and several thousand miles for bombers and large surveillance platforms such as AWACS, JSTARS, and Rivet Joint. Although refueling can extend this range for brief periods, it is not a practical solution for projecting a large U.S. air presence for lengthy

periods. Air bases are needed for that purpose. The current lack of air bases in outlying regions thus means that despite their mobility, USAF forces have difficulties engaging in major projection operations of an enduring nature to many important places.

This situation could be remedied by developing a network of DOBs in the relevant outlying areas. These bases would usually be owned and operated by host-country forces, but would have room for receiving U.S. air forces when a situation arises. The United States thus would not be faced with the expense of building new air bases from scratch. Instead, it might find bases with sufficient capacity to handle squadron-sized U.S. deployments without having to add additional facilities. In some cases, the United States might wish to add such assets as ramp space, runway length, aircraft shelters, maintenance sheds, personnel housing, and storage for ammunition and fuel. In each case, the result could be an airfield capable of absorbing sizable USAF reinforcements on short notice, without the time-consuming efforts now needed to build a supporting infrastructure. By developing a large network of these bases, USAF forces could quickly deploy to many new locations, thus providing an early reaction capability in the critical period before U.S. ground and naval forces can arrive in strength. A similar idea was pursued in Central Europe during the Cold War, when the United States worked with NATO allies to develop colocated operating bases for bedding down USAF reinforcements from CONUS. The same principle can be applied to make the USAF overseas presence more effective in the power-projection role.

Indeed, careful planning could provide a capacity to cover large geographic areas with U.S. air protection. In peacetime, these bases would allow USAF forces to conduct training and exercises with a large number of foreign air forces. The potential effects of an air base network in Europe are shown in Figure 5.1. EUCOM would retain its current USAF main operating bases (MOBs) in Germany and Britain, but its aircraft (and NATO aircraft) would be configured to fly eastward to a number of different locations.

The chart envisions DOBs in four countries—Finland, Poland, Hungary, and Romania—combined with improvements to bases already existing in Turkey. The result is a flexible, responsive USAF air coverage along the 2,000-mile strategic arc from the Baltic Sea to



Figure 5.1—A Sample Air Base Network in Europe

NATO's borders with the Middle East. By using these bases, USAF and NATO units could quickly fly to any location along this arc in peace, crisis, or war. The result would be not only greater U.S. influence and presence, but also greater security and stability for the entire region. In addition, the security of NATO's new members would be better safeguarded, and greater stability could be brought to the Balkans, the Black Sea and Caucasus region, and the Middle East. DOBs in North Africa could have a similar effect there.

Figure 5.2 shows a similar network of DOBs in Asia. USAF would retain its current MOBs in Japan, Korea, and Okinawa. The MOBs now provide an integrated airpower radius covering Northeast Asia as far south as Taiwan. To extend this Asian air security belt southward, USAF DOBs could be established in the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and, ultimately, perhaps Vietnam. This long belt of DOBs would enable USAF forces to deploy quickly from their northern MOBs or from CONUS, thereby projecting significant airpower in a matter of hours along the 3,000-mile arc stretch-

ing from Okinawa to Thailand. As in Europe, manpower requirements for this air belt would be determined by the personnel needed to keep DOBs in “warm status” (that is, not immediately operational but capable of reaching this status quickly).

What would be the cost of such a network? Assuming average investment and operating costs of \$200 million to \$300 million per base, the cost of a global network of 15 DOBs would be \$3.0 billion to \$4.5 billion through 2010. Smaller expenses per base would lower the cost. Manpower requirements would be about 15,000–20,000 personnel. Although these costs are not trivial, they are moderate. A sense of perspective can be gained by comparing these costs to those of maintaining the current USAF overseas presence. Whereas the life-cycle cost of seven USAF FWEs is about \$140 billion, the added expense of deploying them overseas at their current locations is also large: about \$15 billion to \$20 billion through 2010. A full network of DOBs thus would add only about 3 percent to total costs and about

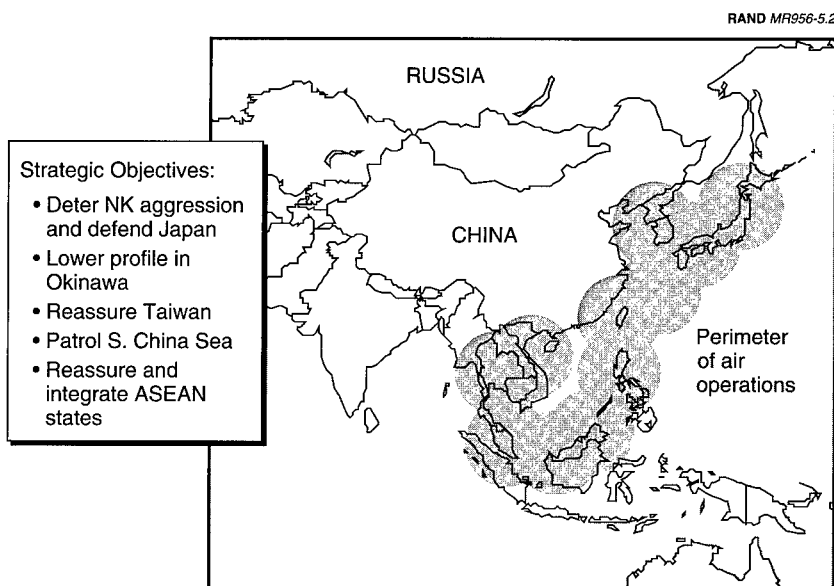


Figure 5.2—A Sample Air base Network in Asia

20 percent to the current costs of overseas stationing for USAF forces. At issue is whether a marginal added expense of 20 percent will generate commensurate returns in security. If this study's portrayal of an enlarging U.S. security perimeter is correct, the returns will be not only commensurate with the costs but significantly greater.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has concluded that the United States will need to keep a quite large, but different, U.S. overseas presence during the coming era even if current MTW threats fade. These forces will be needed to help shape the strategic environment in peacetime, to respond to potential contingencies, and to remain prepared for surprising changes. The United States needs a new and better overseas presence to perform more effectively at projecting power outside its current locations, into outlying regions in all three theaters.

If the posture of 2010 will be significantly different from that of today, changes will need to be planned wisely so that they are carried out effectively. In summary, the following are the new departures:

- A better C4ISR system that can monitor developments in outlying regions
- Large deployments of combat forces, based on a new and flexible theory of requirements in each theater
- A portfolio approach to assembling an appropriate presence
- A joint posture, with a new force mix based on the future contributions of each component
- Use of the new military doctrine, RMA, modernization trends, and reengineering options to shape the specific features of the new overseas presence
- A sustained high optempo for U.S. forces deployed overseas so that new missions in outlying areas can be performed
- Building of new reception facilities, bases, and military infrastructure, and prepositioning in outlying regions
- A network of new air bases to speed deployment of USAF forces to locations requiring operations
- Increases in FMI and security assistance.



These departures offer the promise of building a new and better U.S. overseas presence that can perform the new missions ahead far better than is the case today. These departures apply to all three theaters, but in different ways that will depend partly on how future conditions evolve in each of them and partly on the specific U.S. force presence selected for each theater. The following chapter discusses how the U.S. overseas presence in each theater might be affected.

---

**OPTIONS FOR FUTURE U.S. OVERSEAS PRESENCE**

---

Without offering a fixed blueprint, this chapter addresses the issue of how to carry out change so that objectives are matched to resources, both for expected conditions and for radically different circumstances. The analysis begins by briefly describing eight options. It then evaluates these options both individually and collectively, and it concludes with an assessment of the practical implications for DoD and USAF.

**A SPECTRUM OF OPTIONS**

The options are described below:

1. **Continuity Posture.** This option is labeled “status quo plus,” because it aspires to preserve the current overseas presence, while carrying out only those changes that are already planned—such as force modernization, additional prepositioning, and minor development of new infrastructure in outlying areas. It maintains current forces and manpower levels, and its annual cost is estimated at \$12.5 billion.
2. **Evolutionary Posture.** This option moves beyond the status quo plus by carrying out limited additional changes slowly and incrementally to modestly enhance the capability of U.S. forces to operate in newly important regions. Its forces and manpower of 225,000 personnel are virtually the same as today’s posture, and it seeks only modest improvements to allied forces. However, it aspires to complete by 2010 about 50 percent of a comprehensive effort to build an infrastructure network in outlying areas. Its annual cost is \$14.0 billion.

- 3. Reengineered Posture.** This option alters the status quo in faster and more comprehensive ways than Option 2 does. Its manpower level is 195,000, a slightly lower number of personnel, but it seeks improved capabilities by developing a more relevant posture. It changes the U.S. force mix, reengineers force structures by substituting technology for labor, and fosters major improvements in power-projection capabilities through a better outlying infrastructure, which is to be assembled by 2010. It also seeks better capabilities from allies and coalition partners. Because of savings through elimination of unnecessary assets and reengineered structures, its annual cost is \$14.5 billion, a slightly higher cost than for Option 2.
- 4. Rotational Posture.** Whereas Options 1–3 emphasize a still-large U.S. overseas presence, this option downsizes and places much greater reliance on power projection from CONUS. Accordingly, it withdraws about one-third of U.S. military manpower and combat forces, which would acquire rotational missions from CONUS. It relies on enhanced commitments from allies and coalition partners to compensate for deficiencies in initial defense capabilities. Its manpower level is 150,000 personnel. It could apply savings to build a better outlying infrastructure. Depending on decisions in this area, its annual cost is \$10.4 billion to \$13.5 billion.
- 5. Gulf-Heavy Posture.** This option anticipates the potential emergence of a more serious military threat to the Persian Gulf oil fields by permanently stationing large U.S. forces there. Overall manpower levels remain the same as today's because of redeployment of forces from Europe and Asia to the Persian Gulf. Its annual cost is \$14.0 billion to \$15.5 billion.
- 6. Asia-Heavy Posture.** This option responds to the potential emergence of an unstable Asia menaced by a strong, imperial China. It envisions a larger U.S. force presence than is there now, one aimed at balancing and containing China across the Asian region. Its overall manpower level remains the same as today's as a result of redeployments from Europe. Its annual cost is \$14.5 billion to \$16.0 billion.
- 7. Global Threat Posture.** This option responds to potential military threats in all three theaters, including threats to Europe from Russia. It does not envision a new peer rival, but instead separate,

competent competitors in all three regions. It would result in a larger U.S. overseas posture of 340,000 personnel aimed at better containment, deterrence, and initial defense everywhere. Its annual cost is \$20 billion to \$25 billion.

- 8. Stable World Posture.** This option develops a plausible response if international conditions stabilize to the point where major U.S. troop withdrawals can be contemplated. It defines a minimal posture that will still be needed to underscore permanent stability. It requires 110,000 personnel, and its annual cost is \$8.5 billion.

These options should be evaluated in relation to not only their ability to deal with the conditions for which they are designed but also their ability to adapt to other conditions that might emerge. Flexibility thus is a key attribute.

Judged by this standard of performance and flexibility, Option 1 makes sense only if both U.S. policy and the international scene seem destined to change at a snail's pace. Options 2 and 3 make sense if the pace of change seems likely to be much faster, thereby mandating a still-large but altered U.S. overseas presence. Option 4 is attractive only if much greater reliance on power projection is feasible and if significantly fewer combat forces are needed overseas. Options 5-8 make sense only if the United States develops a confident forecast that, for good or ill, the international system is headed toward a radically different situation than exists today.

This study's view is that the best choice for today is between Options 2 and 3. At first, it may appear that an evolutionary response such as Option 2 is more attractive because it launches the process of change, although not in ambitious ways. Closer inspection suggests that the reengineering alternative, Option 3, has counterbalancing features because it gets greater strategic mileage from similar resources. Even though it requires greater willingness to promote difficult changes, it may do a better job of supporting future U.S. policy, responding to the international developments that seem probable, and fostering greater flexibility. Its ability to create savings means that its cost is only moderately higher than for Option 2.

In choosing between these options, much depends on the U.S. government's sense of urgency, its confidence in anticipating and

shaping the future, and its willingness to work on designing a new, updated overseas posture. The immediate future will probably witness a debate over the evolutionary response versus a more ambitious effort, one that mirrors the debate now taking place over the entire U.S. defense posture. In the interim, as discussed later, there are practical steps that DoD can take to initiate the process of change without having to make final decisions on its scope or destination.

The following analysis endeavors to survey these options and their consequences impartially. Its main point is that the United States has a wide range of choices at its disposal. Their trade-offs should be clearly understood if a sound choice is to be made. Accordingly, the analysis portrays and evaluates each option in terms of eight characteristics: primary strategic purpose, manpower levels, combat posture and force mix, force structures, modernization trends, actions in outlying areas, coalition practices, and budget costs. These characteristics show how each option would produce a distinctly different U.S. overseas presence for the coming era.

### OPTION 1: CONTINUITY POSTURE

Although some observers call for maintaining the status quo, this option is not viable in its purest form because DoD already has adopted plans to modernize U.S. overseas forces. It is anchored in the premise that U.S. policy and international conditions in 2010 will be essentially the same as those of today. The following are its key characteristics:

- **Primary Strategic Purpose**—NATO border-defense commitments in Europe and threat-based planning in Asia and Persian Gulf, plus selective PSO operations
- **Manpower Levels in Key Theaters**—A total of 225,000 military personnel, as today:
  - Europe: 110,000
  - Asia: 90,000
  - Persian Gulf: 25,000 on temporary duty [TDY])
- **Combat Posture and Force Mix**—Traditional warfighting posture; current mix of

- 4 divisions (8 brigades)
- 6.5 fighter wings
- 3 CVBGs
- 3 ARGs

distributed among the three theaters

- **Force Structures**—Current Army, USAF, and Navy structures
- **Modernization**—Significant modernization as new weapons enter inventory
- **Actions in Outlying Areas**—Current naval deployments and prepositioning plans; few improvements to C4ISR and outlying infrastructure
- **Coalition Practices**—Participation in new NATO arrangements, but otherwise the same as today
- **Budgeted Costs**—\$12.5 billion annually (midpoint estimate).

Under this option, the U.S. overseas presence would continue the current strategic rationale of meeting NATO commitments in Europe and carrying out threat-based defense plans in Asia and the Persian Gulf. Its manpower levels and distribution, combat forces, and structures would remain untouched.

This status quo plus option would provide U.S. overseas forces new weapons and munitions as they come off the production line. Prepositioning of equipment also would increase somewhat. This option, however, would make no special additional efforts to increase C4ISR and infrastructure assets in outlying areas. For example, DoD has announced a plan to spend \$200 million annually on outlying infrastructure as NATO enlarges. This increase would be funded, as would similar modest efforts in Asia, but no other major measures would be funded. Annual budget costs are estimated at about \$12.5 billion—similar to today's costs.

Under this option, the U.S. overseas presence in 2010 will closely resemble that of today. Manpower levels in all three theaters will remain the same, as will combat formations. Combat forces will be stronger because they will benefit from the modernization scheduled for the coming decade. Compared to today, these forces will have vir-

tually the same units and structures, operating locations, missions, and coalition practices. This does not mean, however, that no changes will occur. For example, U.S. forces in Europe will be performing limited collective defense missions in the CEE region as the three new members nominated at the Madrid Conference join the alliance. But overall, changes will be marginal. The U.S. overseas presence will remain focused on protecting current defense perimeters, and it will acquire no major new involvements in outlying areas or assets for carrying out such involvements. Nor will it be working with a larger array of forces from allies and coalition partners.

How can this option best be appraised? Provided international conditions and U.S. policy goals do not change appreciably, this option has obvious attractions. It is an understandable stance if the United States wants to minimize the amount of effort to be invested in reforming overseas presence. It will reassure those countries that prefer an unchanging U.S. overseas presence. It is not static because it provides the U.S. overseas presence with room to improve through modernization, which will bring some political benefits. Moreover, it would project an image of U.S. reliability in all three theaters, while avoiding disruptive changes and postponing controversial choices for as long as possible. It also avoids new expenses at a time when the defense budget will be strained, and it does not disrupt the U.S. defense program in other ways. For all these reasons, it is today's choice not only for the U.S. government, but also for most foreign countries that host U.S. forces on their soil.

Nonetheless, the continuity option seems less attractive when one considers the changes in international affairs and U.S. security requirements that may lie ahead. This option would leave the U.S. overseas presence clinging to threat-based planning at a time when threats may be fading and when peacetime environment shaping and adapting are rising to the fore. In addition, U.S. forces abroad would still be defending their old security perimeter, not operating in outlying areas, where a major portion of the real strategic action probably will be taking place. Moreover, the U.S. overseas posture would remain dominated by current forces, not the different mixes and new structures that will probably be mandated by new missions. By 2010, the continuity option could leave the U.S. overseas presence looking like an inflexible anachronism, not an able servant of U.S. policy and strategy.

If this study is correct in forecasting that major strategic changes lie ahead, the issue is not whether the continuity option can survive, but instead, "How long can it survive?" Sooner or later, it will be overtaken by events in ways that compel change. The key international events that could compel change are easy to identify. In Europe, the key event will be NATO enlargement, which is scheduled to begin in 1999 and could evolve well beyond current formulations. In Asia, the key events include Korean unification and China's emergence as a serious Asian power that menaces its neighbors and vital sea lanes. In the Persian Gulf, a key event will be Iraq and Iran acquiring sufficient military strength to contest U.S. reinforcement plans for defending the Gulf oil fields. These or similar events would thus uproot the fundamentals of current U.S. overseas defense plans in all three theaters. Although the future is impossible to predict, some or all of these events could occur by 2005, or even before.

A key risk of this option is that it could leave the United States without a long-term vision of where the overseas presence should be headed. The United States could find itself continuously reacting to events and improvising. The consequence could be a stream of patchwork decisions aimed at shoring up a dying policy, but ultimately producing an incoherent and ineffective posture. In Europe and Asia, the United States could be pushed into removing old assets that no longer are needed while not replacing them with new assets that are required by new conditions. In the Persian Gulf, it could wind up scrambling to assemble a stronger posture attuned to new threats at a time when regional political conditions would make such a response politically difficult, if not impossible. The simultaneous rush of events in all three theaters could further reduce prospects for a sensible response in each of them.

The strong potential for such a negative outcome is a primary reason for surmounting the temptation to cling to the continuity posture for too long. A policy of vigorous change is no guarantee that sound decisions will be forthcoming, but it greatly increases the odds of a successful response. Because the continuity option closes the door to developing a coordinated but flexible program for a long-term strategic vision, it offers a less-effective strategic performance than does a policy of change.



## OPTION 2: EVOLUTIONARY POSTURE

Whereas Option 1 emphasizes continuity, this option acknowledges the need for significant changes in the strategic purposes and activities of the U.S. overseas presence. Its key feature is that it seeks to keep these changes limited and to carry them out in slow, measured ways. The result would be an evolution into the future that preserves the core features of the current U.S. overseas presence and institutes new departures only where they are clearly mandated and can be easily achieved. Its guiding concept is to keep virtually the same forces as today and slowly develop new missions and infrastructure assets in outlying areas. In these areas, it might ultimately arrive at the same destination as Option 3, but much later. Whereas Option 3 would come to fruition in 2010, Option 2 would achieve completion by about 2020, and would be only half completed in 2010.

Under Option 2, modernization remains the main dynamic for bringing about an improved posture. Manpower levels and regional distributions change marginally, but for the most part, current combat formations and structures remain unaltered. The key change is that U.S. forces would start becoming more active in outlying areas and would acquire a slowly growing array of infrastructure assets and partners for carrying out new missions there. Unlike Option 1, this option thus recognizes the need to begin preparing for an enlarged security perimeter in all three theaters. Yet it endeavors to carry out the necessary strategic transformation in cautious, calibrated ways. Although this option thus is guided by a sense of new directions and purposes, its philosophy nonetheless is “one step at a time.” The following are the key characteristics of this option in 2010:

- **Primary Strategic Purpose**—Regional stability and related environment shaping in Europe; threat-based planning in Asia and Persian Gulf
- **Manpower Levels in Key Theaters**—225,000 in three theaters—unchanged levels:
  - 110,000 in Europe
  - 90,000 in Asia
  - 25,000 in Persian Gulf (10,000 PCS)

- **Combat Posture and Force Mix**—Start shift to portfolio posture in Europe; warfighting postures in Asia and Persian Gulf:
  - 6–7 brigades
  - 6.5 fighter wings
  - 3 CVBGs and 3 ARGs
  - Somewhat higher optempo
- **Force Structures**—Current Army, USAF, and Navy structures
- **Modernization**—Significant modernization as new weapons enter inventory
- **Actions in Outlying Areas**—Slowly begin developing C4ISR, air bases, other facilities, and infrastructure; more FMI and security assistance, including committing 3,000 personnel to new installations
- **Coalition Practices**—Seek moderate improvements in NATO power-projection capabilities
- **Budget Costs**—\$14.0 billion annually, \$1.5 billion above current budgets for outlying infrastructure, optempo, prepositioning, FMI, and security assistance

The evolutionary posture differs from Option 1 in some important respects. Although it still emphasizes threat-based planning in Asia and the Persian Gulf, it embraces the strategic purpose of regional stability and environment shaping in Europe. Its manpower levels would be the same as for Option 1, but its distribution of manpower is somewhat different because of a trimming of combat forces and logistic support assets that generates 7,500 personnel for operating new bases and facilities in outlying areas. In Europe, Option 2 begins moving toward a portfolio posture by shifting one heavy brigade to light status. In the other two theaters, it preserves warfighting postures. In Asia, however, it plans to withdraw a brigade-equivalent of Army and Marine forces because, although the Korea standoff is not resolved, growing South Korean capabilities permit somewhat less reliance on early U.S. ground reinforcements. In the Persian Gulf, Option 2 initiates the transition to a permanent U.S. presence by Permanent Change of Station (PCS) of 10,000 U.S. military personnel in C4ISR and reception billets, but it does not permanently station U.S. combat forces there.

Although Option 2 embraces modernization, it envisions no changes to current force structures. However, its trimming of ground forces results in a small shift of force mix toward air and naval forces. Its biggest change is that it creates a partial network of seven DOBs in outlying areas of Europe and Asia, plus related facilities for Army and Navy forces. An important feature of this option is that it envisions steady NATO progress on building a deployable ARRC force of four divisions and six fighter wings, but it does not seek additional allied contributions to projection missions elsewhere. Compared to Option 1, this option costs \$1.5 billion more annually, about a 10 percent to 15 percent increase, because of funds for new bases and facilities, optempo, FMI, and security assistance.

How can Option 2 be appraised? Compared to Option 1, it is better suited for an era of changing international conditions and strategic requirements. It departs from the "status quo plus" because it develops better capabilities for U.S. overseas forces to project power into outlying areas in both Europe and Asia. In doing so, it recognizes the growing importance of environment-shaping missions and new contingencies in both theaters. It also renders the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf more permanent. These changes aside, however, it is similar to Option 1 because it keeps the current U.S. overseas posture largely intact. It seeks no major changes in force mix or structures. Nor does it do a complete job of permitting U.S. power projection into all of the new outlying areas. For example, DOBs might be established in Poland, Hungary, and the Philippines. This improvement is helpful, but it falls short of developing a full network of bases in Europe, the Middle East and Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia.

Option 2's gradualist stance toward change has two indirect, but important, downsides. By not retailoring the force mix and reengineering force structures, it passes up the opportunity to develop important new capabilities in ways that can signal purposeful efforts abroad. Equally significant, its emphasis on retaining nearly all current forces means that assets less relevant to emerging conditions are not trimmed in ways that generate savings. As a result, its modest improvement programs in outlying areas drive up the overseas-presence budget by more than might otherwise be necessary. This elevation of costs reduces the likelihood that even these modest new measures will be implemented.

An issue is whether Option 2 provides sufficient security returns to justify its greater costs. However, the new U.S. overseas presence probably will be able to perform substantially better at carrying out U.S. policy and strategy in all three theaters. In particular, its acquisition of a modestly improved outlying infrastructure will enable U.S. overseas forces to do a better job than Option 1 would of shaping the environment, responding to new contingencies, and reacting to strategic changes in the new geographic locations. Option 2 thus seems to pass the test of cost-effectiveness, but its attractiveness is diminished by its lack of savings elsewhere.

The larger issue is whether Option 2 embraces the future fast enough and vigorously enough. It tries to preserve most of the status quo, while making sufficient changes to keep the U.S. overseas presence viable in the coming era. The problem is that halfway measures are sometimes not enough. When a new era dawns, the best course can be to embrace reform and change more fully. The key question is whether Option 2's marginally altered U.S. posture will be able to meet the security requirements of the coming years adequately. To the extent that it does not, Option 2 is too slow and too cautious, thus making it less attractive than Option 3.

### OPTION 3: REENGINEERED POSTURE

Compared to Option 2, the reengineering option accelerates the pace and scope of change in the U.S. overseas presence:

- **Primary Strategic Purpose:** Regional stability and related environment shaping in Europe; threat-based planning in Persian Gulf
- **Manpower Levels in Key Theaters:** 195,000 in three theaters:
  - 90,500 in Europe
  - 68,000 in Asia
  - 36,500 in Persian Gulf, PCS status
- **Combat Posture and Force Mix:** Shift to portfolio postures in Europe and Asia; warfighting posture in Persian Gulf:
  - 3 divisions with 6 brigades
  - 8.5 FWEs

- 3 CVBGs and 3 ARGs
- Higher optempo
- **Force Structures:** Reengineered structures with 15 percent less manpower
- **Modernization:** Significant modernization as new weapons enter inventory
- **Actions in Outlying Areas:** Develop elaborated network of C4ISR, air bases, other facilities, and infrastructure in outlying areas at steady pace; fund more FMI and security assistance, including committing 6,000 personnel to new installations
- **Coalition Practices:** Major improvements in power-projection capabilities of NATO and Asian allies
- **Budget Costs:** \$14.5 billion annually:
  - \$3.3 billion above current budgets for outlying infrastructure, optempo, prepositioning, FMI, and security assistance.
  - \$1.3 billion in savings from manpower reductions.

It aspires to a comprehensive overhaul of the posture that is to be completed by 2010. It intensifies the shift away from threat-based planning toward environment shaping and a portfolio posture. It adopts an altered force mix that places more emphasis on air forces, and it reengineers the force structure by substituting high-technology capital for labor to produce lower manpower levels but greater capability. It funds a larger network of bases and facilities in outlying areas, and it seeks significant improvements in allied forces. The outcome would be a new U.S. overseas presence that can do a much better job of projecting power into new locations where U.S. interests will be at stake, and where the future international system will be shaped.

This option is based on the premise that the pace of international change is likely to accelerate, thus mandating a parallel U.S. response. In Europe, it foresees a NATO enlargement that includes more than the three countries nominated at the Madrid conference, and that pulls the alliance into many additional involvements elsewhere around Europe's periphery. In Asia, it foresees Korean unification, coupled with China's emergence and growing U.S. activities

in the strategic arc stretching from Okinawa to Southeast Asia. In the greater Middle East, it forecasts growing military threats to the Persian Gulf and accelerating Western involvements from North Africa to Turkey. In responding to this projected upsurge of activities in these outlying areas, it aspires to develop a reformed U.S. overseas presence that by 2010 will be able to effectively carry out a full set of new missions.

This option thus emphasizes environment shaping in Europe and Asia, while preserving threat-based planning in the endangered Persian Gulf. Its manpower level is lower than the current posture—about 195,000 personnel versus 225,000 now—because, although additional manpower is added to pursue new activities, offsetting cutbacks are made elsewhere. As a result of the continued fading of threats in Europe and Asia, it reduces ground combat forces there. Moreover, it takes advantage of efficiencies through reengineering of combat and support forces to reduce staffing levels of residual forces by 15 percent. It compensates for the removal of ground forces by deploying two more fighter wings (one to Europe and one to Asia), while increasing the optempo of CVBG and ARG deployments. Accompanying these reductions are increases in USAF forces and staffing of a sizable network of new bases and facilities in outlying areas. The consequence is a somewhat lower manpower level in Europe and Asia but an increase in the Persian Gulf. Whereas European manpower drops to 90,500 and Asian manpower to 68,000, Persian Gulf manpower rises to 36,500 permanently stationed personnel.

The shift toward a portfolio posture in *Europe* is carried out through several mechanisms. For Army forces, a two-division structure is maintained, but the current posture of four heavy brigades is reduced to two such brigades; a Prepositioning of Materiel Configured in Unit Sets (POMCUS) is maintained for one of the two withdrawn units. Meanwhile, other Army combat forces are increased through the deployment of a new deep-strike brigade that combines MLRS and air assault units, along with stationing of an additional battalion specially trained for PSO missions. Meanwhile, this option deploys an additional USAF composite fighter wing of F-15, F-16, and A-10 aircraft that is designed for power-projection missions. Finally, this option develops five DOBs and ground force reception facilities in the CEE region and Turkey to enhance EUCOM's ability

to deploy forces to the east and southeast. By 2010, EUCOM would have a new posture of two divisions (three brigades), 3.3 FWEs, one CVBG, and one ARG.

The changes in *Asia* would be equally dramatic. Because of projected Korean unification, this option removes two ground brigades from Northeast Asia. It withdraws the 2nd Infantry Division from Korea, and leaves behind a single Army brigade that is tailored for projection missions in Asia. The brigade would have a balanced mix of armored, infantry, and air assault assets. This option retains the Marine Expeditionary Force in Okinawa but withdraws one Marine brigade, leaving behind one brigade and current air assets for projection missions. In addition, it deploys one more USAF composite wing, plus support aircraft for long-range deployments. The consequence is a new Asian posture of 2 brigades, 4.2 wings, one CVBG, and one ARG, all configured for Asia-wide missions. Accompanying this altered force posture are seven DOBs at appropriate locations discussed earlier, and a new naval base in Southeast Asia for servicing rotational deployments.

Meanwhile, the U.S. presence in the *Persian Gulf* would become more permanent and larger. This option permanently stations current U.S. forces that are now deployed on TDY. In addition, it deploys a U.S. Army heavy brigade in Kuwait to enhance deterrence and defense options against a surprise attack on the Gulf oil fields. The consequence is a new Gulf presence of one brigade, one fighter wing, one CVBG, and one ARG, backed by current plans for prepositioned assets and reinforcement from CONUS. Whereas Persian Gulf deployments account for only about 10 percent of the U.S. overseas presence today, they would amount to nearly 20 percent of the new posture. In the Gulf, as well as other theaters, some naval deployments might be handled by new battle groups led by arsenal ships or other ships carrying cruise missiles, thereby contributing an additional innovation to this option.

Budget costs for this option are estimated at \$14.5 billion annually, which is an increase of \$3.3 billion owing to its new features. But it also reduces current costs by \$1.3 billion because its manpower requirements are lower than they are now. The net increase is \$2.0 billion over current spending, but only \$500 million more than the evolutionary posture. Both Options 2 and 3 can be pursued with less

spending increase by scaling back on new facilities, FMI, and security assistance, even though this would bring about a loss of strategic performance. Compared to Option 2, however, the reengineered posture generates more savings by trimming unneeded assets in ways that strengthen its ability to get maximum strategic benefits from its resources. As a result, this option is very cost-effective.

This option also is intended to help foster major improvements in power-projection forces by allies and partners in Europe and Asia. The NATO allies would develop a projection posture of six Army and Marine divisions, eight fighter wings, and commensurate naval forces. The Asian allies would develop a presence of three divisions, four fighter wings, and naval forces. These forces would then have bases and facilities in outlying areas for regional projection missions. This combined improvement must be taken into account when evaluating the budget costs of this option.

This option has several attractions. It offers a strategic vision and a comprehensive plan for the new era by transforming the U.S. overseas presence into an instrument of power projection and greater involvements throughout the area encompassed by the expanding global security perimeter. It conveys a greater sense of U.S. purpose and energy throughout the world. It innovatively uses new technologies, reengineering concepts, better infrastructure, and nonlinear approaches to force mix. It provides better environment shaping and flexible adaptivity in Europe and Asia, while strengthening U.S. initial defense capabilities in the Persian Gulf. It fosters major improvements in burden-sharing. Moreover, it achieves these gains at manpower levels that are 15 percent lower than now. Whereas the current U.S. overseas presence deploys 225,000 personnel, this option's manpower level would be 195,000. The most controversial aspect of the current U.S. overseas presence—ground combat forces—would be trimmed by 25 percent in Europe and by 50 percent in Korea and Okinawa.

Most important, this option allows the United States to innovate robustly and affordably. It is far more affordable than the simpler approach of adding new assets for new requirements on top of the existing posture while preserving those assets that are no longer as relevant. If the simpler approach were adopted, it would enlarge U.S. overseas manpower by fully 40,000 personnel as a result of new units



that are deployed: The posture would then grow from 225,000 personnel today to 265,000 tomorrow. That approach would also increase the annual expense of overseas presence from \$12.5 billion today to \$17.8 billion tomorrow. In the strategic and fiscal setting that probably lies ahead, resource increases of this magnitude—about 20 percent in personnel and 40 percent in funding—are “beyond the pale.” The reengineering option reduces resource needs by trimming away old, unneeded assets and by fostering efficiency-enhancing reforms in force structures.

Its drawbacks are also evident. Even with its efficiencies, its budget costs are about 15 percent more than current costs, even though they are only 4 percent higher than the evolutionary posture, which fosters improvements in slower and less significant ways. Equally important, it requires the United States to exert considerable effort on behalf of a complex, sweeping overhaul of its overseas presence that can succeed fully only if several allies and partners support the effort. Meanwhile, the United States must carry out an ambitious agenda of internal restructuring and other defense reforms of its own. Some observers might judge this agenda as too weighty to be carried out at the speed and scope envisioned here. The rejoinder is that strategic reforms of this magnitude have been accomplished before, that a 10-year period provides ample time, and that even if full success is not gained, a partial success will make the effort worthwhile.

If judgments are made that international conditions will change slowly and that the United States does not want to invest efforts in reforming its overseas presence by 2010, this option not only is unneeded, but is also more than can be tolerated. If the opposite judgments are made, however, this option is more attractive than Option 2. The reason is that although its costs in money and effort are larger, its benefits are higher, and it meets requirements for a complex, dangerous world. Option 2 costs somewhat less, but its benefits are substantially lower, and it does not adequately meet future requirements in this world.

#### **OPTION 4: ROTATIONAL POSTURE**

Whereas Options 2 and 3 endeavor to create a still-large and revitalized U.S. overseas presence for new missions in outlying areas, this

option moves in the opposite direction: troop cuts that produce partial strategic retrenchment in response to fading threats. It withdraws one-third of U.S. personnel stationed overseas—not only ground forces, but also air and naval forces. These forces would withdraw from Europe and Asia. Many of their missions would then be performed via power projection from CONUS. Most of the withdrawn units would perform periodic rotational exercises from CONUS to stay engaged in their respective theaters.

The following are the features of the rotational posture:

- **Primary Strategic Purpose**—Create a lower U.S. military profile abroad, while performing residual environment-shaping missions in Europe and Asia; maintain defense preparedness in Persian Gulf
- **Manpower Levels in Key Theaters**—150,000 in the three theaters:
  - Europe: 70,000
  - Asia: 55,000
  - Persian Gulf: 25,000 on TDY
- **Combat Posture and Force Mix**—Shift to smaller portfolio postures and rotational practices in Europe and Asia; maintain current warfighting posture in Persian Gulf:
  - Europe: 1 division with 2 brigades, 1 fighter wing, 1 CVBG and 1 ARG at 50 percent optempo
  - Asia: 2 brigades, 2.0 fighter wings, 1 CVBG and 1 ARG at 50 percent optempo
  - Persian Gulf: Current forces
  - Rotational deployments from CONUS to Europe and Asia for exercises and crisis management
- **Force Structures**—Current force structures, but ones that are open to reengineering
- **Modernization**—Current modernization plan
- **Actions in Outlying Areas**—Can be done with or without program for C4ISR, new bases, and facilities

- **Coalition Practices**—Transfers initial defense responsibilities to allies and coalition partners
- **Budget Costs**—Depend on stance toward programs for outlying areas; the following costs assume expenses for rotational exercises but no new strategic mobility programs:
  - \$10.4 billion annually with no new programs for outlying areas
  - \$12.0 billion with moderate program
  - \$13.5 billion with full program

The idea of a rotational posture was originally conceived several years ago as a way to lower the U.S. military profile abroad and to decrease its expense. An additional purpose could be to use the savings to fund new overseas-presence measures that might not otherwise be affordable. This option therefore comes in two versions—either with a better infrastructure in outlying areas, or without such an infrastructure. The former version yields an improved capability in these areas but with few savings. The latter version offers higher savings, but leaves the United States no better able than it is today to project power outside the existing security perimeter.

This option calculates that because immediate threats will no longer exist in Europe and Asia (assuming Korean unification), a smaller U.S. posture, backed by rotational deployments from CONUS, will suffice for future environment-shaping missions and will provide adequate flexibility and adaptivity. A related calculation is that a lower U.S. military profile abroad is a desirable objective and that reduced spending on overseas stationing of forces can free funds for other DoD priorities. An important feature of this option is that by reducing U.S. manpower and force levels, significant funds can be made available for programs in outlying areas without increasing overall spending on overseas presence. If force structures are also reengineered, their levels can be further reduced to 128,000, and annual expenses can be reduced to \$9.5 billion to \$12.5 billion.

The chief attractions of this option are its lower manpower levels and costs for the baseline posture and the opportunities it creates for new investments. Its key assumptions are that fewer threats translate into lower force requirements, even though the U.S. security perimeter will be growing, that rotational deployments from CONUS will ade-

quately compensate for withdrawn forces, and that allies can be relied upon to carry larger burdens in Europe and Asia. If these assumptions are valid, this option is a viable one. If not, this option could damage the ability of the United States to carry out its foreign policy and defense strategy in the coming era.

A key premise of the rotational posture is that the United States can increasingly rely on its power-projection capability from CONUS to perform overseas presence missions. Yet U.S. strategic mobility forces are not expected to grow significantly in the coming years. The biggest increase in these forces has already been accomplished. Their ability to move tonnage overseas in a crisis will increase only marginally as a result of acquiring C-17 aircraft and large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ships. DoD appraises its mobility program as adequate to meet expected needs but not sufficient to provide surplus assets to compensate for less overseas presence. Without a large increase in mobility forces and budgets, which is improbable, the rotational posture could be hard-pressed to deliver on its promise of undiminished security in crises and wars. This will be the case unless allies upgrade their forces, thereby compensating for fewer U.S. overseas forces.

Reacting to crises and wars is not the only issue. Another key issue is whether this option's lower force and manpower levels retain enough combat units in Europe and Asia for peacetime environment-shaping missions on a daily basis, for example, routine patrols and training with allies. EUCOM's combat forces would be cut by one-half: It would now have only two brigades, one fighter wing, and a CVBG and ARG deployed in the Mediterranean only 50 percent of the time. The U.S. posture in Asia would be similarly affected: It would have only two brigades, two FWEs, and a 50-percent optempo for its CVBG and ARG. This option is similar to Option 2 (the reengineered posture) in its reductions of ground forces, but unlike Option 2, it takes no steps to offset the loss by increasing air deployments and naval optempo. In the Persian Gulf, this option does not reduce forces, but it does nothing to strengthen the U.S. presence there.

Even with periodic deployments from CONUS, would EUCOM and PACOM have enough combat forces and manpower to carry out their peacetime missions? Would they still be able to maintain coalition preparedness by training and exercising with allies and partners?

Would they be able to take advantage of a better outlying infrastructure, assuming such an infrastructure is built? Could they handle a larger security perimeter with substantially fewer forces than now? In particular, would their air and naval forces be adequate? Would the effort to induce allies to carry larger burdens be damaged because so many U.S. forces are leaving? Would potential adversaries still be deterred and destabilizing regional dynamics adequately contained? Would the United States be able to react flexibly if the future in all three theaters proves more surprising and turbulent than is postulated by this option? If the answers to these questions are negative, this option could damage U.S. security interests in all three theaters. If the answers are positive, this option seems more attractive.

#### **OPTION 5: GULF-HEAVY POSTURE**

Whereas Options 1–4 are appropriate candidates for expected strategic conditions, Options 5–8 are suitable only for radically different conditions, that is, greater threats or greater stability. These last four options are discussed here in lesser detail than were the other options, but with sufficient detail to illustrate their broad features and main implications. Their main effect is to broaden the range of options that should be considered, and to call attention to the larger changes that may be made if any of these different strategic conditions becomes a reality. They envision manpower levels as high as 340,000 personnel and as low as 110,000 personnel. None of these options assume reengineering of force structures, which could reduce manpower levels by 15 percent.

Option 5 is a Gulf-heavy posture that responds to a significantly increased threat to the Gulf oil fields in the form of a potential surprise attack by larger, better-armed forces than exist today. Accordingly, it permanently deploys a larger U.S. force presence in the Gulf. To keep the total U.S. overseas presence at current levels, it reduces forces in Europe and Asia. Largely because of added costs of construction and operations, the act of deployment of more forces to the Persian Gulf likely would elevate the current overseas presence budget from \$12.5 billion annually to about \$14.0 billion; additional spending on infrastructure, FMI, and security assistance could increase the total to \$15.5 billion. This option's key features in all three theaters are shown in Table 6.1

**Table 6.1**  
**Option 5: Gulf-Heavy Posture**

Assets	Theater			Total
	Persian Gulf	Europe	Asia	
Manpower (thousands)	75.0	85.0	65.0	225.0
Brigades	3.0	3.0	2.0	8.0
Fighter wings	2.3	1.6	2.6	6.5
CVBGs	1.5	0.50	1.0	3.0
ARGs	1.5	0.50	1.0	3.0

A principal effect of this option is to make the total manpower and forces in the Persian Gulf similar to those in Europe and Asia. Because its key goal in the Persian Gulf is to assemble sufficient U.S. forces to conduct an initial defense in the period before CONUS-based reinforcements arrive, it increases the current Gulf posture to a heavy division and 2.3 fighter wings. It also supplements current naval forces by rotating the CVBG and the ARG in the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf for 50 percent of the time, thereby providing a surge capability for crises. European deployments are thus reduced to 85,000 personnel and smaller combat forces. A parallel reduction takes place in Asia, where greater stability on the Korean peninsula is assumed to permit redeployment of two brigades and two fighter squadrons to the Persian Gulf. If forces cannot be shifted from Europe and Asia, the U.S. global overseas posture would grow to 265,000 personnel.

This force distribution illustrates the potential effects of having to defend the Gulf more strongly with current forces while not stripping Europe and Asia bare. Its key point is that, provided Europe and Asia are stable, the goal of a better Gulf defense can be accomplished without a major increase in the total U.S. overseas presence. Its strategy is not to deploy more forces from CONUS, but instead to move already deployed forces to the theater that faces greater danger than it does now while consolidating forces elsewhere.

#### **OPTION 6: ASIA-HEAVY POSTURE**

The strategy of intertheater movement at constant manpower levels also applies to Option 6, but in ways that yield an altered force mix.

Option 6 develops an Asia-heavy posture that responds to a threat from China to the nearby SLOCs during the next decade. This option deploys more air and naval forces to Asia, which are intended to operate along the arc from Okinawa to Southeast Asia. To help generate these forces without greatly elevating total manpower levels or denuding the Persian Gulf, it borrows from Europe. Similar to Option 5, it assumes that Korean stability permits fewer forces there. This option probably would elevate current spending for overseas presence from \$12.5 billion annually to about \$14.5 billion; additional spending on other assets could increase the total to \$16 billion. Its key features are shown in Table 6.2.

In Option 6, the U.S. presence in Asia grows to 115,000 personnel. The force mix there shifts because of the increases in air and naval deployments and the withdrawal of two ground brigades. The U.S. presence in Europe drops to 75,000 as a result of redeploying a brigade, a CVBG, and an ARG. Because of the loss of maritime assets in the Mediterranean, EUROMEDCOM's air forces acquire sole responsibility in peacetime for the missions of air defense and rapid firepower projection there, and its ground forces acquire rapid reaction missions formerly performed by Marines. The CVBG and ARG are rotated to Asia. The brigade withdrawn from Europe is deployed to the Persian Gulf to bolster the U.S. defense posture there. The overall effect is a reshuffled overseas presence in which the force mix changes, Asia acquires the largest manpower, but total manpower stays constant. This intertheater strategy could be adopted only if Europe and the Korean peninsula are stable. Provided this is the

**Table 6.2**  
**Option 6: Asia-Heavy Posture**

Assets	Theater			Total
	Persian Gulf	Europe	Asia	
Manpower (thousands)	35.0	75.0	115.0	225.0
Brigades	1.0	3.0	2.0	6.0
Fighter wings	1.0	2.3	6.0	9.3
CVBGs	1.0	0.0	2.0	3.0
ARGs	1.0	0.0	2.0	3.0

case in both places, Option 6 provides a viable way to defend a more-endangered Asia at current manpower levels, while keeping sufficient forces in Europe and the Persian Gulf. If forces cannot be shifted from Europe to Asia, the U.S. global overseas posture would, however, grow to 250,000 personnel.

#### **OPTION 7: GLOBAL THREAT POSTURE**

An approach that keeps manpower levels constant would no longer suffice if bigger threats appear in more than one theater. For example, U.S. troops could not be moved from Asia to the Persian Gulf if Korea remains troubled or China becomes an adversary. To address such developments, additional U.S. forces would have to be deployed from CONUS to overseas locations. Option 7 addresses the extreme case of regional threats appearing in all three theaters. In this scenario, the United States would not face a new peer-rival that mounts a coordinated global threat, but instead sizable and competent competitors in each theater. The effect on U.S. defense strategy is global because preparatory defense measures must be taken in all three theaters.

Deploying larger forces to all three theaters would increase spending from \$12.5 billion annually to \$20 billion to \$25 billion, depending on the amount expended on infrastructure, FMI, and security assistance. The overall U.S. force posture would have to increase to support a larger overseas presence, thus necessitating a bigger DoD budget. For example, the entire current USAF active posture would have to be deployed overseas to support this concept. Thus, the U.S. posture would have to be increased in the form of more fighter wings, carriers, and probably divisions. Table 6.3 displays the main features of this option's global-threat posture.

This option assumes that in Europe, Russia emerges as a regional threat, not a theater-wide threat. It acquires a capability to launch a limited single-axis attack of about 25–35 divisions and 1,200–1,500 combat aircraft in the CEE region. In response, NATO is compelled to move large Main Defense Forces eastward to help defend the borders of its new members. U.S. forces would participate in this redeployment. To provide EUCOM sufficient forces to perform this mission while handling other theater responsibilities, this option ele-



**Table 6.3**  
**Option 7: Global Threat Posture**

Assets	Theater			Total
	Persian Gulf	Europe	Asia	
Manpower (thousands)	75.0	150.0	115.0	340.0
Brigades	3.0	6.0	2.0	11.0
Fighter wings	2.3	3.5	6.0	11.8
CVBGs	1.5	1.0	2.0	4.5
ARGs	1.5	1.0		4.5

vates the U.S. presence in Europe to 150,000 personnel, 6 brigades, and 3.5 fighter wings. The Persian Gulf deployment is the same as that of Option 5, and the Asia deployment is similar to that of Option 6.

This option illustrates the broad force requirements that probably would apply to a global threat of this nature. A key feature is the increase in total U.S. manpower from 225,000 to 340,000 personnel. Yet this higher level is still below the 450,000 personnel that were deployed abroad during the last two decades of the Cold War. Unlike the Cold War period, however, large U.S. forces are deployed not only in Europe and Asia, but also in the Persian Gulf.

The new posture also produces a different force mix than today's because the three components increase in dissimilar ways. Compared to today's posture, ground combat forces are about 40 percent larger, air forces are 80 percent larger, and naval forces are 50 percent larger. Air forces grow by the largest amount because more of them are needed in the Persian Gulf to provide deep-strike assets, and in Asia to provide quick regionwide projection assets. Ground force requirements could increase further in any one of three contingencies: a bigger Russian threat in Europe, a different Gulf threat that requires more stationed brigades, and a need to defend against a potential Chinese attack by large ground forces in Korea or elsewhere in Asia. Short of these developments, a U.S. posture that provides a richer mix of air and naval forces seems the most appropriate response to a new global threat.

### OPTION 8: STABLE WORLD POSTURE

This option is the opposite of Option 7. It illustrates a U.S. overseas presence in the event that all three theaters make major progress toward enduring stability by 2010. As a result, the manpower levels are reduced by more than one-half below today's. Its primary goal is to retain sufficient U.S. forces in all three theaters to perform residual environment-shaping missions there, including coalition activities, training, and exercises. Compared to today's annual expense of \$12.5 billion, this posture would cost about \$8.5 billion. Its key features are portrayed in Table 6.4.

This option illustrates the type of overseas-presence assets that would still be needed for most other options. Option 8 suggests that the United States likely would not totally disengage from overseas locations. Instead, it might reduce its presence to about 100,000 troops. Moreover, it would retain strong footholds in Europe and Asia while keeping a small presence in the Persian Gulf. This manpower level reflects only PCS totals, and does not include troops and formations that might periodically deploy overseas for training and exercises. At particular times, actual U.S. deployments might surge close to 150,000 personnel but subside in the aftermath.

An important feature of this posture is that the U.S. overseas presence would become heavily naval. This is the case because the United States will remain a maritime nation with a keen interest in defending the seas even in peacetime. However, optempo for CVBGs and ARGs might drop lower than that of today—for example, to 50

**Table 6.4**  
**Option 8: Stable World Posture**

Assets	Theater			Total
	Persian Gulf	Europe	Asia	
Manpower (thousands)	10	40	50	100
Brigades	0	1	1	2
Fighter wings	0	1	1	2
CVBGs	1	1	1	3
ARGs	1	1	1	3

percent on-station time. This option envisions that the United States would remain a continental power, though at significantly lower force levels than those of today. It would retain a ground brigade and a fighter wing in both Europe and Asia. It would also retain surveillance assets, command structures, and austere reinforcement infrastructures in all three theaters. Thus, it would possess the capacity to reconstitute a larger overseas presence in each theater if conditions worsen.

Complete withdrawal of U.S. ground and air combat forces would lower the U.S. presence to about 30,000 personnel in Europe and Asia, and to about 70,000 personnel worldwide. Only a command staff, a reception infrastructure, and naval forces would remain in the two theaters. This step would be advisable only if the United States is content to have a purely reinforcing posture for both theaters, and is willing to greatly de-emphasize coalition planning and alliance leadership there. U.S. forces could depart the Persian Gulf entirely, but at the cost of having no peacetime presence. The U.S. overseas presence in this scenario will therefore depend more on U.S. foreign policy objectives than on contingency requirements.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

Official DoD thinking today emphasizes continuity for the U.S. overseas presence in the coming years. Whether continuity actually will be the case over the next decade and beyond, however, is doubtful. Most probably, the future challenge will be one of guiding a changing U.S. overseas presence, rather than presiding over a mostly unchanged situation.

These eight options are not definitive, but they do illuminate the wide spectrum of different forms that the U.S. overseas presence could take by 2010 or later. By about 2010, the U.S. presence could range anywhere between 100,000 and 340,000 personnel, and its force mix might be distinctly untraditional. The main implication is that DoD is best-advised to develop multiple different plans and programs for departing from the status quo, should that step become necessary. As part of this effort, prudence dictates that special attention be given to the possibility that new threats will emerge in some or all of these theaters. Consequently, Options 5–7 need to be kept in mind, for they offer responses to such threats.

If strategic conditions evolve in probable ways, however, the range of realistic alternatives facing the DoD is best expressed by Options 1–4. They help define the extent to which Pentagon planning should be prepared to contemplate changes in the U.S. overseas presence. Table 6.5 illustrates how these four options compare in terms of their budget costs, manpower, and their ability to carry out the key strategic precepts of shaping the environment, responding to contingencies, and preparing for the future by being flexible and adaptive. The table ranks the performance of these options on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). The rotational posture includes two estimates for cost and performance, depending on whether a program for outlying infrastructure is funded.

The performance scores depicted in Table 6.5 are judgmental, but they broadly illustrate the trade-offs and consequences posed by these four options. They suggest that the key issue is not defending the existing security perimeter at current locations, but instead carrying out the future strategic agenda in outlying regions. They also suggest that the proper choice is a function of objectives, willingness to commit resources, and attitude toward change. The options that cost the least money and impose the fewest

**Table 6.5**  
**Evaluating the Key Options**

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Posture	Continuity	Evolutionary	Reengine- ered	Rotational
Annual budget costs (billions)	\$12.5	\$14.0	\$14.5	\$10.4–13.5
Manpower levels (thousands)	225,000	225,000	195,000	150,000
Current locations				
Shaping	4	4	5	3
Responding	4	4	5	3
Preparing	4	4	5	3
Outlying areas				
Shaping	1	2	4	1–2
Responding	1	2	4	1–2
Preparing	1	2	4	1–2

improvement-oriented changes are those that perform the weakest. The options that cost the most money and demand the greatest changes are those that perform the best. As a result, the United States is likely to get out of its future overseas presence exactly what it puts into it. The respective features of these options can be summarized as follows:

- The continuity posture requires only current budgets and few changes, and although it does a good job of defending the current security perimeter, it performs poorly in outlying regions.
- The evolutionary posture costs more, but performs better in outlying regions.
- The reengineered posture costs the most, but performs best in the outlying regions.
- The rotational posture costs the least, and erodes performance within the current security perimeter. But if more funds are expended, it does a somewhat better job than now of handling the outlying regions because of its pursuit of a better infrastructure there.

The reengineered posture offers the greatest strategic “punch” for the future U.S. policies and international conditions that are expected. Of the four options, it also does the best job of situating the United States to respond effectively if a more dangerous world, with new threats, emerges. The key issue is whether the United States will be prepared to exert the effort and pay the costs of this option to gain its full benefits. If it is not, the evolutionary posture offers a fallback position that provides at least some of these benefits through 2010, and the opportunity to continue improving in the aftermath.

Although these options and trade-offs require further evaluation before firm decisions can be made, some practical steps can be taken in the interim to strengthen defense planning and programming. DoD could

- view the U.S. overseas presence as a distinct defense program, and view it in global terms because the three theaters are interconnected—what the United States does with its forces in one theater will affect the forces in other theaters

- increasingly treat the U.S. overseas presence as an instrument for regional power projection, not just stationary local defense
- think innovatively and creatively about peacetime environment shaping and adaptivity, not just responding to crises and wars
- consider not just one option but several and determine how DoD can best situate itself to carry out any of them
- look beyond the near term to consider how requirements might evolve some years from now, and how these requirements might affect current plans and programs
- start increasing the funds allocated to new infrastructure and facilities in outlying areas, including Europe and Asia
- examine prospects for reengineering overseas force structures
- analyze options for deploying different manpower levels, postures, and force mixes in the coming years
- become prepared for rapid strategic changes that compel new directions in the U.S. overseas presence
- intensify efforts to persuade allies to develop better power-projection capabilities.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIR FORCE

Although these recommendations apply to all three services, USAF may be especially affected. In past years, USAF has tended to pay less attention to overseas presence than did the Navy. The emerging situation suggests that USAF should broaden its thinking in this arena. USAF forces may at least be required to perform a host of new missions in outlying areas. Beyond this, USAF forces may come to play a larger role in overseas presence than is the case today, and its overseas deployments may increase. Alternatively, other services may experience declining overseas commitments in ways that shift the spotlight toward the Air Force. If the future emphasis of overseas presence is to be quick power projection, USAF forces are clearly well-suited to playing a major role. Thus, the future agenda for the U.S. overseas presence offers the Air Force important opportunities if it is willing to rise to the challenge.

How could the future agenda affect specific USAF plans and programs? The full answer is beyond the scope of this study, but three preliminary observations can be offered. First, future requirements for stationing U.S. forces overseas could necessitate more than the 20 fighter wings now in the USAF posture, or at least a greater emphasis on active units rather than reserves. If so, the current drift toward reserve component forces may be going in the wrong direction. Second, new or expanded overseas air bases and infrastructure may become critically important in the coming years. If so, the programmatic challenge facing the Air Force will go beyond procuring new aircraft, munitions, and associated hardware. Third, future overseas missions may place a greater premium on long-range operations that are well beyond the normal flying radius of unrefueled fighter aircraft. If so, the Air Force will need to buy or upgrade the necessary long-range combat aircraft, tankers, and other equipment. To the extent these observations prove accurate, they alone raise important issues about how the Air Force should evolve in the coming years. However, as the U.S. overseas-presence agenda is contemplated, other important implications for the Air Force may emerge as well.

## SUMMARY

Although the future agenda for the U.S. overseas presence will be one of striking an appropriate balance between continuity and change, the number of changes ahead may be greater than is commonly realized. A long-range vision thus is needed not only to provide a sense of ultimate destinations but also to provide guidance on how short- and mid-term measures should be pursued. Any attempt to craft a single vision will confront the reality of dealing with uncertainty. Depending on how future strategic conditions unfold, any one of several, quite different options may chart the path to the future. The task therefore will be one of preparing for the conditions that seem most likely to evolve, while developing the flexibility to move in several directions.

The choice therefore seems to be between changing in moderate and evolutionary ways or instead accelerating the scope and pace of change by pursuing a more-ambitious reengineering of the U.S. overseas presence. In important ways, this choice mirrors the same

choice facing the entire U.S. defense posture. The debate between these two alternatives may intensify in the coming period, but whether it will soon be resolved remains to be seen. In the meantime, the U.S. government can take practical steps to improve its plans and programs for its overseas presence in the coming era. In this way, it can start preparing for the future now.



---

**CONCLUSIONS**

---

The challenge facing the U.S. overseas posture likely will be to strike a sensible balance between continuity and change. Thinking in terms of either more manpower in order to deal with bigger threats or less manpower to deal with smaller threats is the wrong way to ponder the future. The better way is to analyze how a similar manpower level can be redistributed and rearranged so that it can be used effectively in dealing with the new conditions ahead.

Threat-based planning is already fading in key regions. In the coming era, U.S. forces may be stationed abroad not primarily to defend against threats, but instead to pursue broader peacetime strategic purposes. The military manpower required by these purposes may be similar to today's, but this manpower may need to be used differently than now.

A complex, but still-dangerous international system is evolving. Some years from now, U.S. forces likely will be operating outside their current security perimeter: in new geographic locations in all three regions of Europe, Asia, and the Persian Gulf. In all locations, they must remain capable of defending against lingering or new threats, and of responding to crises and other contingencies. But they also will be focused on the peacetime political objectives of promoting stability and preventing conflict. In order to preserve the peace, they will be devoting major attention to shaping the environment and preparing themselves so that they can react flexibly and adaptively to new, surprising conditions. This strategic agenda points toward a future of new missions and tasks in new places for the U.S. overseas presence.

This study has called for building a better military infrastructure in outlying areas so that U.S. overseas forces can be projected outward, beyond their current bases. It has also suggested that the DoD could focus on building a reengineered posture based on a new force mix and new structures that take advantage of emerging technologies to enhance U.S. military capabilities. If this departure is unacceptable, a more-modest, evolutionary approach is an appropriate response that makes better sense than marginally tinkering with the status quo. Using an improved U.S. overseas presence to induce allies and partners to become better at power projection is also an important part of the coming reform agenda.

Exactly what kind of U.S. forces should be stationed abroad for the coming era? Much depends upon future conditions that are hard to forecast. This study nonetheless has suggested that the future could call for somewhat fewer forces in Europe and Asia but more forces in the Persian Gulf. It also has argued that although joint forces will always be needed abroad, a shift toward a portfolio posture with a richer mix of air and naval forces may become appropriate. One reason is that these forces are well-suited for projection missions in outlying areas. Another reason is that as old threats fade in Europe and Asia, fewer ground forces may be needed there. Thus, future U.S. overseas posture with ample air and naval forces, some ground forces, and a strong outlying infrastructure may be appropriate.

These and related issues will need to be studied thoroughly, and the tradeoffs weighed carefully. The major point is that defense planning should cease to engage in linear thinking about the future posture. What worked in the past may not be right for the future. Creativity and innovation likely will provide the best guideposts to thinking about how complexity and change can best be handled so that the future U.S. overseas presence will be as effective as today's.

---

## REFERENCES

---

- Alberts, David S., and Thomas J. Czerewinski, *Complexity, Global Politics, and National Security*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, Institute for National Security Studies, 1997.
- Blackwill, Robert D., and Michael Sturmer (eds), *Allies Divided: Transatlantic Policies in the Greater Middle East*, Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1997.
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, New York: Basic Books, 1997.
- Calder, Kent, *Pacific Defense: Arms, Energy, and America's Future in Asia*, New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1996.
- Clinton, William J., *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1994.
- Clinton, William J., *U.S. National Security Strategy for a New Century*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1997.
- Cohen, William S., *Annual Report to the President and the Congress*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, April 1997.
- Davis, Paul K., and Richard L. Kugler, "New Principles for Force Sizing," in Khalilzad and Ochmanek (1997), pp. 95-140.
- Davis, Paul K., David Gompert, and Richard Kugler, "Adaptiveness in Defense Planning: The Basis of a New Framework," in Khalilzad and Ochmanek (1997), pp. 69-94.

Davis, Paul K., Richard Hillestad, and Natalie Crawford, "Capabilities for Major Regional Conflicts," in Khalilzad and Ochmanek (1997), pp. 141–178.

International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1996–1997*, London, 1997.

Khalilzad, Zalmay, and David Ochmanek (eds), *Strategy and Defense Planning for the 21st Century*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1997.

Kissinger, Henry A., *Diplomacy*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.

Kugler, Richard L., *The Future U.S. Military Presence in Europe: Forces and Requirements for the Post–Cold War Era*, Santa Monica, Calif., RAND, R-4194-EUCOM/NA, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Toward a Dangerous World? U.S. National Security Strategy for the Coming Turbulence*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-485-JS, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Enlarging NATO: The Russia Factor*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-690-OSD, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Managing Regional Security: Toward a New U.S. Military Posture Overseas," in Khalilzad and Ochmanek (1997), pp. 213–254.

Waldrop, Mitchell M., *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992.